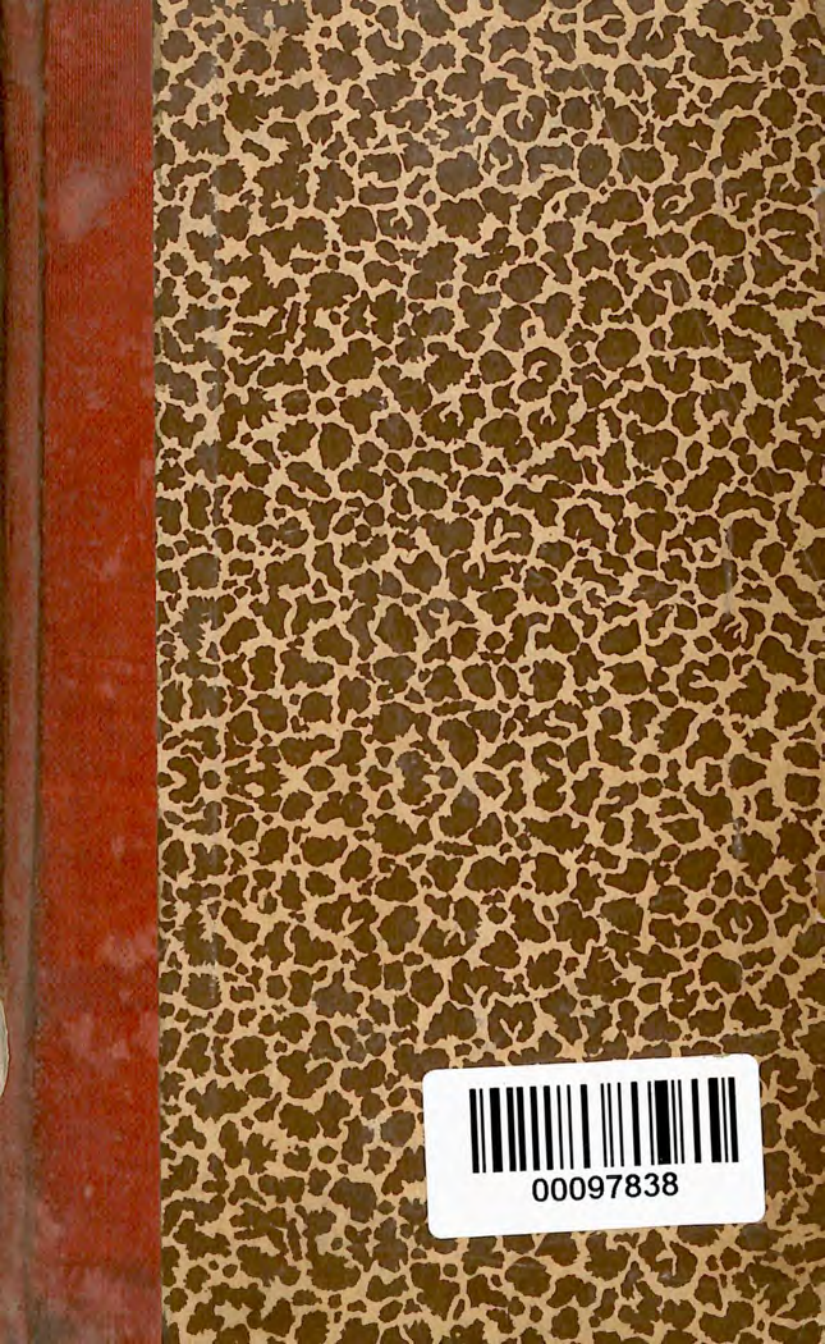
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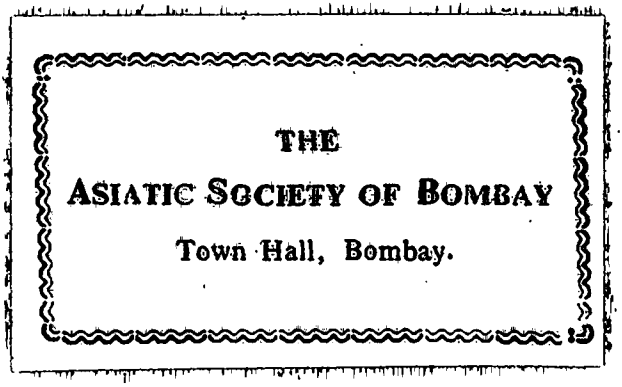

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OUTLINES

OF

CHARACTER:

CONSISTING OF

THE GREAT CHARACTER, — THE ENGLISH CHARACTER, — CHARACTERISTIC CLASSES IN RELATION TO HAPPINESS, — THE GENTLEMAN,—EXTERNAL INDICATIONS OF CHARACTER, — CRANIOLOGY, — THE POET, — THE ORATOR, — LITERARY CHARACTERS, — THE PERIODICAL CRITIC, — THE MAN OF GENIUS.

NN g 12 97838

BY

A MEMBER OF THE PHILOMATHIC INSTITUTION.

" The reader I'll leave in the midst of silence, to contemplate those ideas which I have only sketched, and which every man must finish for himself."

Dryden's Dufresnoy.

London:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1823.

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TO THE

HONORARY AND OTHER MEMBERS

OF

THE PHILOMATHIC INSTITUTION.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING derived the highest gratification, and, I trust, a considerable measure of improvement, from my connexion with your valuable Institution; and having had the honor to deliver before you, some of the Essays comprised in this volume, I owe it, as a testimony of gratitude, to DEDICATE to you these humble effusions.

Allow me to express the respect I feel towards you, not only in your collective capacity, but for the superior talent and moral excellence, by which you are distinguished as individual characters.

It were needless for me to eulogize the object of your Institution, or the ability with which it is conducted. So long as the cultivation of the intellectual powers shall be desirable; and so long as it is essential to promote and encourage Science, Literature, and Art; Institutions, like the PHILOMATHIC, must be important in themselves, and beneficial to the public.

I have the honor to remain,

With sentiments of esteem,

Gentlemen,

Your very obedient, faithful servant,

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON,
November 1, 1822.

PREFACE.

It is a curious fact, that the first preface of every writer has generally commenced with a dissertation on its inutility. It has been said a hundred times, by those who have the most disregarded their own convictions, that "as good wine needs no bush," so a valuable work will recommend itself; and, if worthless, no apology will improve it.

It has been observed also, that with an author's motives for publishing, the world has no concern; and this may be true, so

far as relates to those who are unattached by any tie of previous knowledge, or uninfluenced by any feeling of individual friendship; and who are bound to consider him only in the light in which he is presented to the public, and whose interest in his book is, therefore, limited to its own intrinsic and unassociated merits.

But every writer has a select few, for whose good opinion and sympathy he is naturally anxious; and to this circle, be it limited or extended, his motives are stated, his views explained, and *his preface addressed.*

To those who stand in this relation to the writer of the following pages, he will only say, that many of the subjects were selected and composed at no very matured state of the judgment, during short intervals of leisure from numerous and engrossing avocations,

and as a preparation for a more important work, connected with the science of his own profession. They were originally delivered before literary societies that might almost be called *private;* composed not for the purposes of criticism, but for improvement, and intellectual exercise.

One of the leading objects of the Essays was, to promote and provoke discussion—a quality in which (whatever might be their other faults) they were seldom found to be deficient.

This short history of the original destination of these papers, may account for some of the propositions they contain bearing "such a questionable shape."

The absence of all reference to political and religious opinions, was necessarily occasioned by the regulation of these Societies, which excluded their discussion; and the

author conceives, that the press is sufficiently fertile in subjects of that nature, to render it needless for him to introduce any allusion to them on the present occasion.

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CHAP. I.

THE GREAT CHARACTER.

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OUTLINES OF CHARACTER.

THE GREAT CHARACTER.

"The elements
So mixt in him, that nature might stand up
And say to all the world, This was a man!"

SHAKSPEARE.

THE traditional accounts, which have been transmitted, regarding the early periods of human society, present numerous instances of characters honored by the approbation of contemporaries during their terrestrial existence, and deified by posterity after their departure to other worlds. The quality which chiefly distinguished the heroes of this period was PERSONAL BRAVERY: it was the virtue most in request, and received the highest reward. The prevalence of warfare and violence rendered its display essential to distinction; the reign of Justice had not then commenced; the rights and privileges of mankind

were ill understood; physical strength and animal courage were objects of the first regard, because they were the only means by which their rude felicity could be procured, by which their subsistence could be gained or their possessions secured.

Yet the estimation which Valour thus obtained was not limited to the ruder periods of society: in "the high and palmy state of ROME," Valor and Virtue were synonymous qualities; and, no doubt, in all countries where war is the chief occupation, Bravery, joined to MILITARY SKILL, ranks first in the general esteem. Indeed it is an universal fact, established by the experience of all ages, that those qualities which tend most to promote the general welfare, (be it real or supposed,) or which gratify the general wish, become the most estimable, and are ranked in the order of the highest virtues. Thus, in the heroic ages of Rome, suicide was considered a glorious action. When a hero of that stern and warlike people had been defeated in his mighty enterprizes, and would have dragged on a long

and burthensome life of disappointment and disgrace, by some pitied, and by some despised, it was the general notion that he should redeem the renown of his career by the magnanimity of his death! Thus CATO died, and thus fell BRUTUS and CASSIUS.

In the progress of social improvement, other qualities develope themselves; and, from their importance, attract regard. When the course of events had sheathed the sword, and the restless spirit of man panted for new sources of occupation or amusement, qualifications both of use and ornament, tending either to improve or to delight, became the eager objects of estimation. Pausing from the tumult of war, mankind sought pleasure in the arts of luxury and refinement.

The productions of THE BARD and THE MINSTREL which had been wild and irregular, as the uncultivated faculties to which they were addressed, became comparatively polished and regular; whilst they, who had shown their heroism in feats of chivalry, were commemorated

by the rude efforts of the chisel and the pencil: hence arose the estimation, and afterwards the consequent greatness, of the arts.

It now, also, became necessary to repress violence and usurpation, by other means than the indiscriminating vengeance of the *lex talionis*. The sword and the scales were placed in the hands of Justice; Passion was dethroned by Equity, and the benefits of social order began to exhibit themselves to the satisfaction and the benefit of mankind.

The natural consequence of these improvements was, that, although Valor retained, as it ever ought to retain, its station among the virtues, many others arose into equal estimation. JUSTICE stood prominent in the rank; perhaps, at first, *more* esteemed than in later times. It was then, probably, a virtue difficult to exercise, amidst the claims of kindred and friendship; and every exercise of it partook of the magnanimous. In later times, when the ties of society are more attenuated, the dispensation of justice is less difficult. Although, therefore, it is still esteem-

ed, it excites no admiration: we reserve our applauses for loftier occasions, and expect that Fame should be won by more extraordinary exertions.

JUNIUS BRUTUS exhibited a sublime instance of inflexible justice. In modern times, so different from those in which he lived, we are scarcely able to form an accurate judgment of the motives that dictated the act, or the feelings that enforced it. It requires an effort of the imagination, to transport us back to those remote periods, in order to estimate the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. According to the improved institutions of our tribunals, this cruel test of greatness cannot occur. It is perhaps an instance which may be condemned by many; but, when the peculiar character of the times, and all the circumstances which accompanied it, are well considered, it appears one of the most illustrious instances of mental and moral greatness that ever dignified the annals of mankind.

It is obvious, that, in all ages, FORTITUDE would be held in high esteem. The evils and ca-

lamities of life, in all its stages, are sufficiently great to demand the exercise of unshaken firmness: he who sinks under misfortune, appalled and spiritless, may excite our pity; and it would be unjust to mingle contempt with commiseration; for, although we cannot admire human weakness, we have no right to despise it. On the other hand, no object can be nobler, or more worthy of our undivided respect, than that character, which, struck down by the shaft of adversity, rises superior to the blow, surmounts the evil by courage; or, if insurmountable, endures it with fortitude.

Greatness of character does not, however, consist alone in valour, in justice, or in fortitude: MODERATION is an essential concomitant; since, without it, valor becomes rash and brutal; justice degenerates into cruelty; and fortitude becomes supine or obstinate.

PRUDENCE is *wisdom in practice;* he who is prudent is wise. The essence of it seems to consist in the fitness of the occasions on which it acts; it appears to be the "*finis coronat opus.*"

It regulates the rest of the virtues, points out when they should be exerted in their full rigor, and when moderated by peculiarity of circumstance. Its office is sometimes to remove the ligature which intercepts the vision of justice, and to admit the rays of humanity and mercy. It belongs to the department of practical wisdom to dictate, when fortitude shall rise into courage, and destroy by force those obstacles which time cannot soften or remove. And still more importantly it regulates the precise movements of the principle of moderation; it prevents its relaxation into weakness or indolence, and measures the extent to which it may rightly be indulged: it is the key-stone that completes and cements the moral fabric.

The INTELLECTUAL QUALITIES of Greatness are strikingly distinct from its moral excellence.

The sentiments with which we contemplate the former essentially differ from those we feel towards the latter. The poet, and the artist, the man of science and of literature, each of whom may have become illustrious by successful

exertion, are beheld with the eye of *admiration;* their productions are esteemed, and they constitute the objects of a just and lasting renown. But, thus far, nothing more is bestowed than a ready tribute to *extraordinary talent;* talent which may, and often does, exist without the union of *virtue.* It cannot be denied, that the Arts have sometimes been employed for the basest purposes; and, if the page of literature has exhibited its eloquence in the support and the praise of virtue, it has also been sullied by the direct excuse, or the insidious decoration, of vice.

How different is the homage, and how different are the sentiments excited by the exhibition of mere talent, from that combined feeling of wonder and *veneration,* with which we view a character, eminent in every moral, as well as in every mental, endowment! We separate the man from the rank and the station which he fills and occupies; we speak of great kings and conquerors; of great statesmen, poets, and philosophers; but they are frequently great only in

peculiar and limited attainments; they possess no moral greatness, no loftiness of general character, no true grandeur or elevation of soul.

There is one essential criterion to which we may appeal, in establishing the superiority of moral, over mental qualities: it is this—the intellectual hero shines forth only in *words and ideas;* whilst the very soul of the moral chieftain consists in the *activities and* ENERGIES OF REAL LIFE. The poet, the orator, and the historian, contribute indeed to the *formation* of character: the examples they describe, excite to imitation; and, in this respect, they merit a high share of approbation. But it is easier to pen a precept, than exhibit an example; and, as the latter is more difficult, more useful, and efficacious; so is it more glorious and more ennobling.

The most exalted reach of character, the most elevated, and the utmost which human nature can attain, is that rare assemblage of qualities which unites the zeal, the perseverance, the courage, and unbending virtue of *the patriot*, with

the wisdom of the enlightened statesman and *the philosophic law-giver;* and who enforces his noble views and lofty conceptions, with the eloquence of *the true orator;* and who adds to all these high endowments, the generosity and the mildness of *the genuine philanthropist.* In such a character, we behold wisdom blended with goodness; talent united to benevolence; and eloquence exalted by all those endeared associations, which attach to the remembrance of our "*father-land.*"

A great character must, in short, possess the highest qualities which human nature, in all its powers and faculties, is capable of attaining: it must unite exalted virtue with distinguished talent, and display a combination of moral and intellectual endowments that excite the willing homage, the unbought admiration and esteem, of every human being. The criterion of greatness exists in the human breast: the heart renders an affectionate reverence to that assemblage of exalted qualities, which, separately scattered amongst mankind, are rarely concentred in one

individual. The most distinguished in rank and station feel an involuntary respect for the true hero of the species; and every one who possesses common apprehension and common feeling is capable of receiving and valuing the impression of real greatness.

Greatness of character must, in part, consist of EMINENT ACTIVITY. No virtue or talent which does not demand great energy in its exertion, can rise into grandeur. It is true, indeed, that forbearance is frequently the decisive evidence of an elevated mind; but, at the same time, it demonstrates the possession of some active mental endowment. If, upon just grounds, we forbear to revenge a flagrant injury, though we remain physically passive, we are not *mentally* so. The mind struggles eminently to subdue the strength or impulse of the passions; it has to combat with instinctive power, and with brutal feeling: the conflict is interesting; and, in proportion to its magnitude, the victory is glorious.

That a powerful activity of spirit is essential

to greatness, may be easily illustrated. Even when the motive to an action, the means of its accomplishment, and the end it purposes, are alike vicious; if the design be gigantic and astonishing, and the execution bold and successful, we are unable to withhold our admiration. It is this unconscious and reluctant reward, that gratifies the perverted heroes of iniquity.

> "Late time shall wonder
> That their joys shall raise;
> For wonder is involuntary praise."

The most unsullied purity, the utmost exemption from moral turpitude, does not constitute the chief part of greatness: a mere negation of vice, a passiveness in virtue, are insufficient to excite regard. The anchorite who performs his vow, who, unexcited by the intoxications of life, "grows, lives, and dies," in seclusion from the activity of virtue, as well as vice; may lay claim to a character of sanctity; but he is abstinent, not temperate; he is devout, but not useful; and, though he escape censure, can claim no applause.

To exhibit the true aspect of moral greatness, the character must surmount the ordeal of temptation; must be unstained by vice, though exposed to all its blandishments: eminent in virtue, however unfashionable; just, amidst the impunities and successes of fraud. It must exhibit fortitude in calamity; temperance in an age of luxury; and moderation in the full tide of prosperity and success.

One of the criteria by which we appreciate the value of an action, consists in the MAGNITUDE OF THE SACRIFICE by which it was performed. Where *self* is the chief object, there can be no pretence to greatness. Let the exertions in such a cause be ever so extraordinary, the labor ever so persevering, so unexampled, or so continuous, the act which has *self* for its sole or its *chief* object, has no claim to the approving suffrages of mankind, and will never be enrolled amidst the eulogies of the philosophic historian.

But not only in true greatness of character must *self* be subordinate; but the amplifications of self, the bonds of FRIENDSHIP, and the ties of

KINDRED, can scarcely lay claim to any share in its production.

Thus, the natural affection of the parent to its child will daily produce the most eminent sacrifices; and other relations, in social life, are productive of similar results. To promote the welfare of a beloved object, ease and comfort, repose and pleasure, are willingly sacrificed. These instances are justly estimated as the most *amiable*, *benevolent*, and *interesting*, features in the human character. They prove the existence of the most graceful and endearing virtues; they excite our affection, and sometimes our admiration.

But we cannot pronounce this class of human action *great* or transcendent; comparatively great, indeed, it may be, as all things are great and small by comparison; but it wants those essential requisites which constitute *the sublime* of human character. To the honor of mankind, these instances of private affection are perfectly common; they possess nothing extraordinary, either in motive or character; and it is obvious that those actions, which are now cele-

brated as great and illustrious, would cease to be so when they became general.

In short, all the most eminent sacrifices of personal gratification, made at the shrine of private affection, are never commemorated as great exploits; they spring from natural emotions, of an instinctive nature, and resemble in *kind*, and perhaps do not rise above, even in *degree*, innumerable examples of self-devotedness, and of unselfish exertion, which occasionally distinguish the brute as well as the human race. On the contrary, actions, which are truly great, demand sacrifices of a more exalted nature; they require us to rise above our ordinary feelings and interests; to sacrifice, not only our personal advantages, but those of our kindred and our friends; to disregard all private considerations, and be greatly right,

> "In stern despite to nature,
> Shutting the ear to all her little cries."

The "*laudari a laudato viro*," the praise of the praise-worthy, is too eminent a reward to be

bestowed on light occasions; he who obtains it must not only rise superior to all personal motives, but must have bestowed his exertions upon an object which *widely concerns the common weal:* and, lest projects of greatness might terminate only in imagination, or in inefficient efforts, this high reward is reserved for the *successful* accomplishment of EXTENSIVE AND ENDURING GOOD.

Nor let it be imagined that honorable fame is a slight or an empty reward; most of our moral sentiments are to be traced to a principle of sympathy, common to human nature; and they who condemn a submission to its influence, censure the order of the universe, and the very first spring and source of human exertion and felicity. To those minds which contain within themselves the elements of moral grandeur, the approbation of the whole human race is an irresistible impulse, and stimulates to enterprizes of the greatest "pith and moment." There is something in this indefinite and extensive reward peculiarly grateful both to the feelings and the imagina-

tion: it is not confined to the little world of friends and kindred in which the individual personally moves; he challenges the approbation, not of a single nation, but of the whole habitable globe. Nay more, when his cotemporaries and himself have sunk into the narrow confines of the grave, he looks to posterity—to a renown, extensive and immortal as the benefits or the delight he has conferred upon the human race.

CHAP. II.

THE ENGLISH CHARACTER.

ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL CHARACTER—MANKIND ONE RACE—CLIMATE—EXTRAORDINARY IMPULSES—FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THE EFFECTS, NOT THE CAUSE, OF CHARACTER—LAWS—MANNERS—CIRCUMSTANCES—EFFECT OF THE EVENTS AND DISCOVERIES OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY—ON EUROPE—ON THE ENGLISH—THE CAVALIERS—THE ROUNDHEADS—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS—THOUGHTFUL—TACITURN—PROUD—GRAVE—BUSY—ENTERPRISING—SUCCESSFUL.

THE ENGLISH CHARACTER.

" This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd Isle—
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in the silver sea."

SHAKSPEARE.

NATIONAL CHARACTER consists in those external indications which mark out and contradistinguish one people from another. The inhabitants of all nations possess some characteristics common to the whole human race. The general lineaments of human beings resemble each other: *their passions*, their feelings, their appetites, and their propensities, are of the same nature. In some respects, they differ in degree; but, they are all of a kindred quality. *Their physical structure*, however varying in specific peculiarities, still preserves a general correspondence. Their *mental endowments*,

though infinitely diversified, are yet marked with the same family features, and arise out of the same primitive elements. The new-born child is nearly the same all over the globe.

Of all species of animals, MAN in an uncultivated state is the most weak, helpless, and imperfect. Possessing the advantages of early education, it is difficult for us to form a correct notion of that night of ignorance, in which the species were at first enveloped. Even in an advanced state, the clouds of prejudice continue around them, and for ages their views of wisdom or of goodness are obscure and "dimly seen." In the best of times, amidst the highest advantages, the progress of the intellectual faculties is slow and irregular; but which is celerity and order, compared with the first efforts of uncultivated or barbarous existence.

We may pass, with a very brief notice, those theories which affirm that there are several distinct races of mankind. One ground on which they rest is, the separation of the continents of the Old and New world, and the absence of all

apparent means of intercourse between the interior of each. Towards the extremities, it is admitted, there might be some communication; but then, it is urged, that such communication was limited to the shores, and never extended to the interior. There being no evidence, no tradition, no historical account, that the two continents were ever united, or less distantly situate than they are, it is presumed they have always so existed (*a*).

The inference is not justified by the facts. Such is the change perpetually occurring in the state of the Earth, that no man can pretend to say its condition has always been the same. Nor is the change of an insignificant kind. We know of earthquakes and volcanoes: we have undoubted evidence, from the researches of geology, as well as the traditions of every nation, of *one* mighty deluge. If there be any truth in the statements of scientific geologers, the beds of the ocean and the present existing continents have at some period (perhaps frequently,) changed their relative positions.

The evidence presented by the peculiar diversities of physical appearance in the human race, has also been relied upon. It may be that we know not the precise operations of soil or climate, or what exact period of time will effect the changes that exist. But who can doubt that many things have been, which are not now; and who can assert, what it is that the lapse of ages, and the concurrence of yet unknown causes, cannot effect? (*b*)

It is a deduction of common sense, that the inhabitants of opposite portions of the globe, although possessing one common nature, should differ in temperament, in pursuits, and in habits; —that different arts and sciences should flourish in different regions; — that "the shuddering tenant of the frigid zone" should be dissimilarly marked out from the voluptuary of the torrid clime. The inhabitants of temperate regions, or those of moderate severity, are in general superior to those who are placed in the extremes of heat and cold; in the one, dissolving the

mind into langour: in the other, congealing it into rigidity.

Those EXTRAORDINARY IMPULSES which have occasionally urged on mankind, in particular countries, or at peculiar eras, to uncommon exertion, and enabled them to attain peculiar eminence, have by the action of time and circumstances become *worn out*. They resemble the sudden energy of an individual, who, under extraordinary excitement, exhausts his powers in precocious exertion. They are like those soils which have been forced into unnatural fertility, and require the fallow of repose to recover their exhaustion.—Nations resemble the individuals of which they are composed: they have their infancy, their maturity, and their decline.

It may be no discovery to remark it; but, in tracing the changes of the human character, there is one natural principle, which will be found very important to attend to; and that is, *the love of ease and pleasure.* In countries genial and fertile, where the wants of life and many of its luxuries are obtained by very slight

exertions, we must not look for much invention of mind, or energy of character.

"Swee' are the uses of adversity."

It is in regions that demand the continued application of labour, that we must ultimately expect the elements of human character to expand, to flourish, and improve. Not indeed in the early stages of such countries; not at a period when nearly every one is necessarily engaged in the chace, or at the plough; but when the population has increased, and there is more of the produce of the earth than is necessary to supply the absolute wants of the people, and more labourers than are necessary to its cultivation.

It has been often contended, that the character and condition of nations chiefly depend on THE FORM OF THEIR GOVERNMENT: but the form of government is an *effect*, not a *cause*; it is the consequence of circumstances, and the state of society—the result of a variety of operations, the work of time, and of contingent events. Who-

ever surveys the annals of this or of any other country, with reference to the *substance*, as well as the *form*, of government, and the rise and progress of liberty, will perceive that the nature of the ruling power is a consequence, and not an efficient cause. It has indeed, in the complex movements of society, a re-action, an influence, and a partial effect, on those very circumstances which produced its existence.

As soon might we believe, that the head of the body natural could attain perfection in its powers, and be independent of its relations, and uninfluenced by the state of its several members; as that the body politic could attain perfection amidst the poverty, the slavery, and the ignorance, of the people at large. It is inconsistent, as well with sense and reason, as with the common experience of all ages.

Amidst, therefore, the causes of national character, we must not enumerate (at all events as a chief or leading cause) that of the form of government. The form of government is a mere indication of public opinion; it is the index by

which we may judge of the state and condition of the political knowledge and independence of the people at large; and it is the result, and one of the effects, of that knowledge and public spirit.

In those countries in which the greatest freedom has prevailed, it will be found, that the advantages possessed by the people have not been derived from the form of their political institutions, but from the *intellectual impulse* which has been given by the struggles and the contests for liberty; and the general improvement thus imparted to the character by an *incessant activity and vigilance.* And thus an energetic and busy spirit has diffused itself, from public transactions, through all the details of those multiform avocations in which the people of a country are peculiarly engaged.

The struggle for political freedom is *the subject* on which the powers and faculties of the people are exercised. It is not very important what that subject may happen to be; it might be of a religious or any other character. It must,

however, be considered *momentous*, and its pursuit tend to elevate the conceptions, and to enlarge the mind. The essential thing is to impart a stimulus to exertion, and to give an impulse and a desire for increased improvement.

It has as often, also, been contended, that external causes and circumstances have a predominant effect upon character.

"Mankind," says Montesquieu, "are *influenced* by various causes; by the climate, by the religion, the laws, the maxims of government; by precedents, morals, and customs: from whence," he adds, "is *formed* a general spirit of nations."

"*Influenced*," mankind no doubt are, by these circumstances. But how came these circumstances into existence? With the exception of climate, (and even that is much dependent upon human industry,) these laws, precedents, and customs,—these systems of religion, of government, and morals, were "*formed*" by the people themselves, and were the result of their

general character. The most potent and the most speculative legislator must frame his code in conformity with the spirit of the age; there must be a disposition in the general mind to adopt the system, or it could not be effectuated. The laws of LYCURGUS would not suit the genius either of England or of France. The way in which the greatest changes have been wrought, has been by some master minds, who, seizing upon a favourable concurrence of events and opinions, have "rode upon the whirlwind, and *directed* the storm."

In the result, indeed, the institutions which arise out of peculiar states of society, possess *a reaction*. Having been produced by the general will, they are cheerfully observed, because they harmonize with it; and thus some degree of permanency is given to a system, formed perhaps in haste, and abounding with errors and imperfections.

"LAWS," says Montesquieu, "are made by the legislator; manners and customs, by a nation in general."

It is true enough, that many laws originate solely with *speculative legislators;* and, if they are inconsistent with the manners and customs, and the spirit or feeling of the age, they are *merely speculative;* they cannot be put into practice. Those laws only which are consistent with the character of the times can usefully be executed. We observe this with respect to many sanguinary institutions. It may be true, as the same authority states, that "laws regulate the actions of *the subject*—manners, of *the man.*" But the man and the subject do not act separately; and it is useless to require from a whole nation of "subjects," what, *as men*, they cannot, or will not, perform.

As refinement of manners advances, and modes of artificial life prevail, the human race becomes apparently less individualized. Men are fond of imitation. Whatever they admire, they attempt, in some degree, to resemble; and repeated efforts never fail to produce some effect. But many customs and manners, which are purely of an artificial, arbitrary, and conventional descrip-

tion, tend to *conceal* the real character. They give it a deceptive appearance. They scarcely change or alter the modifications of character, and can never produce its distinctive elements.

The elements of character consist, of course, of passions, propensities, sentiments, feelings, and faculties. The nature of these cannot be changed. Lord Kaims contends, that courage and generosity are produced by the conflicts of war, and would not otherwise exist. But a martial age is only *one* of the means of developing the character of bravery. The same mental characteristic is displayed in times of peace, either amidst political contentions, or in the frequent struggles of busy life. And generosity is equally exercised amidst the forbearance of human intercourse. It is not then, indeed, lauded and distinguished on the historic page, but the actual sentiment is the same; and, since it enjoys not the excitement of public renown, it may justly be considered as of superior, though unnoticed, excellence.

The *mental* character, composed of the several faculties, depends for its development upon natu-

ral sensibility. The *moral* character, composed of sentiments and passions, is dependent upon motives. Circumstances influence and impart activity to innate principles. They modify the aspect, as climate modifies the growth of the vegetable tribe, without altering their inherent nature. They change pursuits and *modes* of action; but the real character continues immutable. The events that happen to man, and constitute his history, shew what his character is: they unfold its properties and qualities, but effect no alteration in its radical elements.

National character, then, is *indicated*, not produced, by political or national institutions: they serve to shew what *the character really is*.

It will be found, indeed, that CIRCUMSTANCES taken in their widest range, develope the character; and, so far as manners and customs extend, they greatly contribute to form it. Perhaps, in the absence of diversity of circumstance, the habits of nations would appear alike:—not that the same circumstances would *now* produce

the same indications of character in every nation: far from it. The different processes through which the human race has passed—mental, moral, and physical—have produced many distinctions and variations.

These distinctions appear now to be indelible. The same circumstances would not now produce the same impression, or lead to the same result: yet it will be found, that the events which constitute the history of a nation, are the causes which have *developed* its natural character.

It may be sufficient, for the sake of illustrating this point, to refer to the effect of those memorable INVENTIONS and DISCOVERIES, which occurred about THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

The effect of the *invention of gunpowder*, alone, was to change, essentially, the whole system of war. The champion of chivalry indignantly exclaimed, that "all the splendid distinctions of mankind were thrown down; and the knight, clad in steel, was levelled to the condition of the defenceless shepherd." Though

this destructive invention acted at first only on the military art, other consequences followed in its train.

In all ages, the few have struggled for distinction amongst the many. They whose ambition would have been satisfied by the proud advantages of the armed warrior, were compelled, when their feats of chivalry were set at naught, to seek new fields for the display of their prowess. Those who were not gifted with any extraordinary mental qualifications, were content to cultivate some of the peaceful arts, the pleasures, the accomplishments, and the amusements of social life.

The invention of *printing* diffused knowledge amongst the humbler classes of the community, and raised both their mental and moral condition.

Commerce was extended by the signal improvements in *navigation*, and the mighty discovery of *another world*; and the wealth that ever follows in its train, was consequently increased.—A wealth no longer confined to hereditary fami-

lies, but spreading its influence over the active classes of the middle orders, and descending, through them, to every portion of society. Thus was a mighty change produced in the whole structure of modern Europe.

In OUR OWN COUNTRY, the consequences of these events and occurrences were more peculiarly felt. There can be no doubt that it was owing to the state of public information and opinion, introduced by the improvements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that the great revolutions in our religious and political institutions soon after took place.

A striking change also appeared in the manners and outward character of the people. THE CAVALIERS were chiefly distinguished for romantic loyalty. This was a sentiment which succeeded to the still more romantic spirit of knight-errantry. The gallant cavaliers devoted their lives and fortunes to their sovereign, as a principle of duty. The honours they derived from the monarch, constituted the object of their ambition, and were the source of their attach-

ment and their gratitude. These feelings were consistent with the circumstances out of which they arose; they are, however, of the same class, as the obedience and the gratitude to an indulgent master, but they are not ennobling; they are deficient in dignity, because deficient in independence.

Although "THE ROUNDHEADS," as they were termed, appear to have displayed very different external manners to those of the Cavaliers; although the former were austere and rigid, and the latter gay and profligate; yet these distinctions, in their extreme, existed only for a season, and evidently were each carried to excess, from a spirit of hostility and opposition. Besides, each class of combatants was equally courageous, and equally attached to *the principle* of their party. They were also, in general, of different rank: the one of the higher, and the other of the middle classes. The leading men of each party alike sought distinction: *the mass* were influenced, and led on, by those principles which usually sway the multitude. The diversity of circum-

stance and object varied the external features of character; but the elements of the national mind continued unaltered.

The superiority of the character of Englishmen arises out of the superiority of their motives, their feelings, and their objects. They are in their nature superior: they have not for their sole object the glory of a single master, however illustrious. There is now blended with a veneration for the constitution and form of government, an ardent love of country, of its liberty, its laws, and its institutions. This union of sentiment is rare, and forms the distinguishing characteristic of England. Of such a combination of circumstances we have no parallel in history. In no other age, in no other country, than our own, have the principal men of the community been so highly distinguished for the splendour of their talents and the dignity of their moral character.

It is from out of the happy combination of natural and political events, that the peculiar excellence of the English character has arisen.

In countries ruled by despotic governments, the baser passions of mankind are too much appealed to. Obedience is there obtained by acting on the principle of fear, and with fear is very naturally connected hatred to its cause. Nevertheless, it is an advantage to society that those who are entrusted with the powers of government should inspire respect. Unless such were the case, there would be nothing to temper the sturdiness and somewhat of the ferocity of unawed independence. The absence of such a feeling must tend to interrupt, if not to destroy, the amiability of social life, and must often produce tumult and commotion.

Perhaps it may be supposed that the free states of America may furnish an example to the contrary of such an opinion. But the American character, from its dissimilar components, is yet unsettled, and scarcely amalgamated into any distinct features of nationality. It may, however, be that the respect which rank and talent never fail to inspire in this country, is, in the United States, trans-

ferred to their laws and constitution alone; yet this will rather act upon the understanding than the feelings, and is ill calculated to supply that refinement which can only be produced by elevated sentiment. Dr. Johnson acknowledged that the feeling of respect which a personal conference with his sovereign inspired was calculated to improve the character; and the Doctor, though an admirer of "the powers that be," was not very remarkable for the *suaviter in modo*.

One of the prominent features of the old and sterling English character is that of THOUGHTFULNESS. Our countrymen of the northern part of the island have been noticed for a shrewd penetration, and a spirit of cautious adventure. The Irish, in all things, exhibit an impetuous enthusiasm. These are qualities that do not form peculiar elements in the composition of the English character. The manhood of Scotland with the youth of Ireland, grafted on the venerable age of the English mind, promise in their united powers, an elevation of aggregate intellect

before unknown, and as yet unmatched, in the annals of the world.

But it is worthy of remark, that there is now less of that spirit of contemplation, of that deep meditative character, which formerly existed in England. It has been often observed, that the European continent is distinguished by a larger share of the *cacoëthes loquendi* than is found to prevail in Great Britain, either in the southern or northern parts of the island. In France especially there is decidedly more general *talk* than in England, and by consequence less of *thought*. So remarkable, indeed, is this, that it is pointed out as one of the principal national contrasts. Of the British, it has been truly and happily said by Goldsmith, that

> "Stern o'er each bosom *Reason* holds her state
> With daring aims irregularly great;
> Intent on high designs, *a thoughtful band*,
> By forms unfashion'd, fresh from Nature's hand."

Perhaps our recent and encreasing intercourse with the continent may have excited a desire for the talent of *greater garrulity*. It must cer-

tainly be allowed that liveliness is agreeable. Animation, even in trifles, never fails to afford pleasure. We are pleased to witness the apparent happiness of others, and all that belongs to that

> "Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
> Pleas'd with itself, which all the world can please."

We have often heard the English characterized as the most thinking people in the world; *they are also the most active.* They are not only the most thoughtful, but the busiest of all the nations of the earth. They have been described as proud; they are also humble. Their thoughtfulness is not mere reverie, or musing abstraction. It is connected with energy, and is the concomitant of enterprize.

They are generally TACITURN; they think, and "*thought is silent.*" Montesquieu observes, "Men who have little business are great talkers." But this remark, however true in France, is not verified in England; the national trait pervades equally the idle and the busy; and it has ge-

nerally happened that the *otium* of an Englishman has succeeded a life of activity and is still accompanied, in retirement, by those habits which had their spring in the bustle of the world, or the dangers of enterprize. Though the English are comparatively silent, they are not deficient in some occasional instances of a different character.

In the quality of talkativeness we have three gradations.

There are some who, weak in intellect, and dull in spirit, possess scarcely any of the elements of social converse; to use a familiar phrase, "they have nothing to say for themselves." They are not incited by any exuberant share of vivacity to *chat* even upon ordinary topics, and have no powers or inclination to enter the wide fields of *discussion*. Their responses are monosyllabic, and their *original* communications are confined to the trifling wants or ordinary necessities of daily life.

There are others who speak only when strongly excited, and when the subject appears

to them adequately important; they are consequently on many occasions totally silent. They are deficient in "*small talk.*"—In that species of conversation which consists in elegant or easy and fluent remarks upon trifling subjects. Their *cacoëthes loquendi* is latent, and the hidden spring must be effectually touched, ere its stream can flow to the surface, or the gathering torrent pour forth its exuberance in the waters of eloquence.

Yet the English are not without some instances of *the great talker*—a personage who has an opinion upon every subject, and a profusion of comment upon every circumstance; to whom nothing is too elevated, or too insignificant; too lively, or too severe. The species are, however, rather few in number; though, to the apprehension of some, indicating a manifest tendency to increase and multiply.

It will be generally found, that *vanity* is talkative, and PRIDE silent. The former is dependent upon the approbation of others; the latter dwells with satisfaction upon its own esteem. The one is ever displaying, or anxious to display, its qua-

lities, and seeking to gain attraction by external glitter;—the other contemplates its own standard of perfection, and models its conduct in conformity to its own peculiar criteria. There will consequently be found far more originality (or, it may be, more *eccentricity*) of character amongst the proud, than amongst the vain. The English, it has been often noticed, possess more pride and less vanity than their neighbours; and, from these different elements of character, they naturally exhibit dissimilar habits and demeanor. Manners and customs, however, as we have seen, merely indicate character, but do not constitute it. They are "the outward and visible signs," which shew the nature of the inward man—they are the fruit by which the tree is known. There is, perhaps, no country in which the manners and customs of the people exhibit less of the aspect of *frivolity*, than Great Britain—every feature appears consistent with the general contour—there is an harmonious "keeping," which prevails throughout the whole of the national character.

It is supposed by some persons, that those who are thus presumed to think so well, and act so wisely, ought also to possess the power of expressing their wisdom; but this is a mistaken notion. *Thought may exist without words.*—Intellectual impressions are independent of language. —Artificial signs toil, in vain, to keep pace with the rapidity of mental operations. Hence it may happen, that an accurate thinker will sometimes speak confusedly, and the expression will but ill correspond with the idea. Whilst the mental perception is correct, luminous, and perfect, a want of sufficient practice, habit, and experience, will often render the language incomplete, inadequate, and frequently unintelligible. Perhaps the peculiar contrast between the wisdom of CROMWELL's actions, and the absurdity of his discourse, may, in some degree, be explained upon this principle.

It may be a subject of regret, that those who think the most deeply and constantly, are generally the least communicative. It appears natural, however, that habits of contemplation and

speculative study, which employ the mind rather in the reflective exercise of its own internal powers, than in observing the external world, should lead to silence rather than to speech. Greatness of mind, the highest exertion of its faculties, is not usually consistent with much garrulity. In general, conversation does not demand any extensive reach of thought. The faculty it chiefly calls into play is the *memory*—a faculty certainly not of the highest order. The most essential requisite in this intercommunication of ordinary converse, is *vivacity* of manner: the pleasure indeed mainly depends upon the style in which it is conducted; upon its ease, its animation and liveliness. The same sentiments and observations, delivered by a man of humour, appear very different when brought forward by an opposite character: or, when uttered vivaciously, instead of being said with dullness, indifference, or insipidity. Yet, *the intellectual matter* may be the same, though wanting the spirit which sparkles and imparts a kindred feeling.

Now the temperament of the English is GRAVE, not vivacious. Though enthusiastic and persevering in their purposes, their habitual feeling possesses more internal depth, than outward animation of manner. Their aspect is serious, thoughtful, and it may be apparently dull. Their demeanor, or carriage, slow and steady, though accompanied and marked by a firm and independent air. Their language is not so well adapted as the French, to the purposes of animated and lively conversation—it is not so exclamatory—so interjectional—it does not possess so many *little elegancies;* and, to attempt them in English, would be pedantry or bombast.

The very nature of their pleasures shews the same features of character. They are fond of snugness, and domestic comforts. They delight in rural recreations; and display, when happiest, a sort of contented spirit of rumination—a chewing of the cud of satisfaction—sauntering slowly, with the hands reposing behind their backs. They do not appear to display to the world their state of felicity; and never call upon others to

"see how happy they are." The general aspect of all about them is that of neatness and convenience; substantial and useful, not elegant or shewy.

That the English are THE BUSIEST, and the most ACTIVE AND ENTERPRISING, as well as "the most thinking people," in the whole world, may be evidenced, decisively, by *what they have effected.* Within the same period of time, no other nation has accomplished so much as the English. Their industry and ingenuity at home, are rivalled only by their enterprizes and success abroad.

From the time of that first great Revolution, which effected so signal a change, not only in the government, but in the institutions and pursuits of the country—when so mighty an impulse was given to every species of improvement—from that remarkable era, down to the present time, (comprising a period considerably less than two centuries,) we have progressively advanced in almost every art and science, and have achieved exploits, which, in their aggregate result, stand

unsurpassed, if not *unequalled*, in all the ample history of the human race.

From a spot of earth, scarcely more comprehensive than the foundation required for the machinery of Archimides, the Genius of England has extended its political and moral sceptre to "the nethermost corners of the earth:" it has extended its influence, its knowledge, its intellectual power, its moral government, if not its conquests, into every region of the globe.

To contemplate such stupendous results; to reflect upon their magnitude, and their probable durability; has a natural tendency to elevate the thoughts, and dilate the conceptions. To belong to such a country, ought to dignify and exalt the character even of those who had no *direct* influence in rearing the national edifice, or in contributing to its excellence. Such a feeling, we may hope, pervades the general mind; and will tend to bestow a permanency upon past attainments, and an impulse to future improvement.

CHAP. III.

CHARACTERISTIC CLASSES,

IN RELATION TO HAPPINESS.

1. THE MAN OF TALENT AND SUSCEPTIBILITY—VALUE OF HIS QUALITIES AND ATTAINMENTS—HIS PURSUIT AND OBJECT —HAPPINESS DEPENDS UPON THE CORRESPONDENCE OF DISPOSITION WITH DESTINY—MADAME DE STAEL.

2. THE MAN OF TALENT WITHOUT SUSCEPTIBILITY — THE EPITAPH OF JUNIUS ON HORNE TOOKE — UNRESTRAINED AMBITION—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

3. THE SUSCEPTIBLE WITHOUT TALENT — SOFTNESS OF CHARACTER—SENTIMENTALITY—MELANCHOLY.

4. THE COMMON-PLACE—THE MAJORITY OF MANKIND—UNDERSTANDINGS AND FEELINGS MODERATE.

5. THE CLOD—THE LOWEST CLASS.

CHARACTERISTIC CLASSES.

" *The great* have but their titles for their glories
An outward honor for an inward toil;
And, for unfelt imaginations,
They often feel a world of restless cares:
So that, between their titles and low name,
There's nothing differs but the outward fame."
——" 'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow."

SHAKSPEARE.

It is no easy task to analyse and discriminate the peculiarities of individual character. There are no two persons precisely alike. The characteristics impressed by Nature, the habits and acquirements of artificial life, those accidents and circumstances which attend or surround us, are so various, and so infinitely diversified, that, though some partial resemblances may obtain, a general and precise similitude never can exist. The history of each person can alone explain

the cause of this variety; but, though such an individual would be best qualified, from a knowledge of the facts, he is, perhaps, of all, the least able to judge accurately of their characteristic effect; whilst the estimate of others can only be resolved into conjecture. Thus, the *means* of judging, and the *power* to judge, are seldom united. The consequence must be, that nothing but plausible speculations can exist with respect to the real causes of character. No one can determine how far, and in what degree, the human character, such as we now find it, is the product of nature, or the creature of education and circumstance. Yet, although it be thus obviously difficult to ascertain or investigate the nature of *individual* character, it may be possible to trace and condense, into something like the simplicity of general principles, the wide congregation of those who constitute the mass of mankind. Though we cannot trace the windings of an insignificant rivulet, we may discern the broad expanse of the Ohio or the Nile.

Individuals, though difficult to be separately

discriminated, may perhaps be reduced into a few general classes.

In the first may be placed those who possess exalted talents and peculiarly susceptible feelings, and who chiefly constitute the highest order of genius. In the next, we distinguish eminent talent, unaccompanied by any extraordinary portion of sensibility. The third class possess great susceptibilities, and but little intellect. The fourth will include the largest part of mankind—consisting of those whose minds and feelings are of a moderate kind, stimulated by none of the pantings of ambition, nor agitated by any of the deeper throbs of sympathy. The fifth class are the comparatively insensible—(they are "the clods of the valley")—they "eat and drink," but scarcely can be said to be "merry," and are never dignified by the thoughtful aspect of sadness.

The class which possesses HIGH TALENTS and SUSCEPTIBLE FEELINGS, is deservedly the first. It is not necessary to enquire, whether these distinctions are possessed by the force of nature alone,

or by a process of cultivation, in part obvious, and in part unknown. The union of talent with feeling, is essential to greatness. If they are not united, it is a mere superiority of *mind*, not of *character*—character includes *moral*, as well as mental, greatness.

In estimating, in a moral point of view, THE VALUE of the EXALTED QUALITIES AND ATTAINMENTS which belong to these gifted beings, we are naturally led to enquire into the actual benefits they confer upon their possessors. The rest of the world regard these personages either with a sentiment of admiration, or of envy; and sometimes with a feeling blending both these sentiments: yet a slight investigation of what is actually *thought* and *felt* by these objects of envy and admiration, would satisfy us that the sentiment is misplaced and unfounded.

We may observe instances of persons evidently capable of the highest felicity, endowed with great capacities of mind, and susceptibilities of feeling, who, to ordinary appearance, possess every earthly means of happiness; yet, are fre-

quently miserable. We witness their possession of health and affluence, of all that the rest of mankind desire, and still observe that these cannot soothe the anguish of disappointment, or allay the fever of distempered fancy. Health and affluence to such persons do not constitute the *summum bonum:* they are so perverse as to think and feel differently from the rest of mankind.

It is stated by Madame DE STAEL, that, in order to possess happiness, "DISPOSITION AND DESTINY SHOULD CORRESPOND." This appears a very just and simple exposition of the principle on which individual happiness depends. But it can rarely happen that Nature, education, and habit, by which the disposition is formed, should so fortunately have performed their office, as to render it precisely adapted to the circumstances and situation in which the individual may be placed. Something must remain to be accomplished by the diligence and perseverance of the person himself; for, if happiness depend on the correspondence of disposi-

tion with situation, and as we are seldom placed in precisely correspondent circumstances, it becomes the task of every one to adapt his disposition, so far as he can, to the peculiar nature of his actual situation. If the couch of PROCRUSTES does not fit the victim, the victim must be adapted to the couch!

In fact, the attainment of a situation correspondent with the disposition, is much dependent on accident; or, in other words, on the occurrence of circumstances out of the control of the individual; and hence the happiness of the first class, though occasionally rising to ecstacy, is of a very uncertain tenure.

This will be obvious, when we reflect on the STATION that is sought to be attained, and the FEELINGS that are sought to be gratified, by the persons in question. With few exceptions, the station they seek, is that of *pre-eminence:* with different degrees of ardor, they all desire to have

"Mankind the gazers: the sole figures *they.*"

Now, though emulation be very meritorious,

if pursued with a liberal and generous spirit, and though much benefit has arisen from the rivalship of ambitious men, we must not forget, that while many are in the fight, the honor and credit of the victory can be enjoyed but by a few. The probabilities therefore are, that the station which is sought by individuals of the first class, will never be gained.

Though there are many who can bear defeat with comparative indifference, yet these will be found to belong to the second class of personages. In the first, with the ambition that pertains to great intellect, and without which, probably, that intellect would never be developed, we have also the utmost susceptibility of feeling; and, whilst that feeling would give increased ardor to the pursuit of the object, it would probe, and widen, and deepen the wounds of disappointment, and prevent, perhaps for ever, the efficacy of every healing influence.

Let no man envy the occasional exultations, the few fleeting moments of renown and honor, which are snatched by the foremost few in the

race of distinction. The purchase is made at the expence of a more solid, if a less brilliant satisfaction—of a more permanent, if a less elevated emotion. Could we witness the anxieties which precede and follow these "longings after fame," the possessors of the reward would deserve our pity, rather than our admiration. We see only the beauty of the fabric. The scaffolding is removed—the labor is not seen—the consuming care that formed the design; the health, the comfort, the hilarity, the portion even of *life*, that has been sacrificed to raise the wonder of a moment, is not the subject of human cognizance. We see the grandeur of the object, and may wish to have the merit of its creation; but will this idle envy, this "momentary buz of vain renown," repay the sacrifice by which it has been purchased? The happiness of these individuals will, in truth, be proportioned to the measure of their intellect. However strong the feelings, if the mind still maintain its preponderance, the equanimity of the character may be preserved. Strong feelings are the general attendants of great

talent; but, though strong and impetuous, they do not always lead to despondency, still less to despair. Among beings, however, of this order, the imaginative faculty is often predominant; and, though it throws numberless charms around the dull realities of life, it increases the vividness of disappointed feeling, and adds new acuteness to the intensity of suffering.

Should circumstances fortunately be in favor of these individuals, they possess the talent to improve and exalt them, and the susceptibility to enjoy their fruit. They have a far higher gratification than others, even in the prosperous *pursuit* of their favorite object; and they are capable of heightening and adorning the charms of *success*. But for these splendid prizes there are many competitors—they are not always bestowed upon merit; and a large majority of the candidates must ever fail of attaining them.

The second class, the possessors of GREAT INTELLECT and LITTLE FEELING, are the persons best fitted for the world. They are most likely to attain their object, because unrestrained by those

"seasonable checks," which make ambition pause:" and, even should they be disappointed, the anguish is small, and the spirit of perseverance sooner renewed. When HORNE TOOKE adopted, for his epitaph, the words of JUNIUS, that "his situation did not correspond with his intentions;" there was more meant than met the ear. The sentiment would imply, that destiny depends on a conformity of the genius of man with the circumstances in which he is placed. It may not be inappropriate to observe, that the genius of that extraordinary being, BONAPARTE, and the times in which he flourished, were peculiarly correspondent. Whether his individual happiness, or the general happiness of mankind, were promoted by that singular union of events, that coincidence of character and circumstance, might be the subject of no little dispute.

It is this second class of personages that will be generally found the foremost in the struggles of AMBITION: they occupy most of the envied situations of life, and most frequently outstrip, in the race, those who are really their superiors

in character. They are persons who need not excite much of our sympathy: they acquire a hardihood of spirit, a power of resisting obstacles, a love of difficulty, and even of danger. Opposition stimulates their exertions, fixes their determination, and adds energy to every action. The majority of these characters are happy: they pursue their object with sufficient ardor to render the chace full of interest; and, if they fail, either resume the contest at a more favorable juncture, or commence a new career, with undiminished resolution and an equal spirit.

To such characters the correspondence of situation with disposition, would not be very important; they would fight their way; and, if they were always in the battle, and never gained the victory, their genius would adapt itself to the nature of such an interminable contest.

The third class, THE SUSCEPTIBLE WITHOUT TALENT, are generally pitiable; yet some of them are eminently happy. The chances of misery are, however, greatly against them. If they are happy, their happiness is more unalloyed than in

either of the other conditions. It is not checked by the cold calculations of reason—it is not disdained by the loftier aspirations of the intellect—it is not disturbed by the activity of a lively apprehension, or the changeful dreams of a luxuriant fancy. Their happiness would be best promoted, if circumstances were favorable, by living, or rather vegetating, after the manner of those amiable descriptions we receive in Zimmerman's eulogium on Solitude. This character, frequently, is imbued with a considerable share of pastoral romance, and delights sometimes in rural amusements, and in sylvan scenery. There is often a great deal of sentimentality attached to it. It has not much ardor, but it has softness and melancholy; and the friendships and attachments it might form, though not very intense, or very durable, would, while they lasted, be probably very tender. We are excluded from supposing the existence of much intellect; but we may, nevertheless, speculate upon some portion of *fancy*. This may be sombre, or it may be playful. If the latter, it will add to the chances

of felicity; and, should no treacherous friend, or faithless lover, interrupt the fairy vision, there is no reason to anticipate the visits of adversity.

But here, alas! we have only the *fair side* of the picture. We find among this order of beings many who are suffering a silent decay from disappointed feelings:

> ——— "The worm i'the bud
> Feeds on their damask cheek.'

In the cells of lunacy, and on the records of suicide, we discover many individuals, of both sexes, that may be characterized as of this class, —the martyrs of feeling and disappointment.

In the general order of things, the disposition of these characters would seldom correspond with their circumstances; and they are without the power of mind, the flexibility of talent, which could either convert circumstances to its own will, or subdue that will to the force of circumstances.

The fourth class are the COMMON-PLACE. They are respectable in understanding, and humane in

feeling. But their understandings and feelings are generally dormant. It is fortunate for their mental and moral advancement, that a few gifted beings start forth occasionally to arouse their slumbering energies. Of this order, is the great bulk of mankind. Their happiness is of a temperate description. It may sometimes, like the tide, rise beyond its usual level; but, generally, it holds a very even course. If we were to state the maximum of human felicity at fifteen, and the minium at five, the class in question would range itself at ten. It would sometimes be below, and sometimes above, par. "On some high festival of once a year," it might mount to twelve or thirteen, but it would consequently undergo a correspondent depression.

Applying the principle of judging happiness by the reciprocity of circumstances with the nature of the character, we may observe that the probabilities of a considerable share of happiness are in favor of the majority. Their talents are moderate, and consequently their ambition is limited. They are disposed to be satisfied with

an ordinary share of the advantages of society. Ease and competency will content them, and success will generally attend the efforts for their acquisition. If they do not speedily obtain their object, it still remains in view, and they are cheered with the hope of ultimate victory. Notwithstanding the moanings of despondency, and the murmurs of disaffection, our own country still possesses the means of satisfying every reasonable want. But those means must be sought out by the hand of persevering Industry; and, when attained, must be dispensed by that of a rational frugality. For idleness, there is no success; and for profusion, no stability.

This class also have the advantage not only of a disposition moderated to the nature of circumstances; but they have the merit, when circumstances are unfavorable, of moulding their disposition to suit the change. The odds are certainly greatly in their favor.

What are we to say of the fifth, and LOWEST CLASS? Upon what does THEIR happiness, such as it is, depend? It consists in their possessing,

what alone they require, the necessaries of life, in something like abundance. Probably they possess some minor anxieties; because, as human beings, they are not exempt from some share of lowly vanity and ambition, or from the exercise of the sordid passions, on a humble scale; but their station renders food, and shelter, and raiment, such predominant objects of regard, that the others have but little scope for action. They are generally insensible; for it is well known, that the feelings, like the faculties, when not exercised, become obtuse, and the pressing wants of Nature absorb all their susceptibilities. —Misery there is amongst this class; and, in populous and luxurious countries, it is to be feared, the evil will continue.

It is necessary, in some degree, to qualify these remarks, by observing, that they are necessarily *general.* The classes may blend, and the individuals of each may unite. It may be difficult to refer particular instances to a precise order. Perhaps they may oscillate from one to another: sometimes indicating talent, and sometimes

fatuity; sometimes feeling, and sometimes insensibility. Each individual is a problem, which can alone be solved by time.

It is the opinion of many, that not only art and science will indefinitely advance and improve, but also that human happiness will indefinitely increase—that, though mankind cannot attain perfection, they will ever continue to approach it. But, as happiness consists in agreeable thoughts and sensations, on thought and sensation it must still depend. Can they become more swift, more numerous, or more vivid? The rapidity of thought is as great as its nature will admit. Ideas may become more accurate, in proportion as science advances; but, though the judgment may be improved by a nicer analysis, and a closer comparison of its mental stores, the imagination will, in consequence, lose much of its illusion, and its charm. An equilibrium will thus be preserved—what is gained in one respect, is lost in another. The influence on the sensations is the same: if they become more suscep-

tible to pleasure, they will also be more subject to pain.

Even should the happiness of *the majority* of mankind increase—should the means and circumstances on which it depends become more favorable to its progress, and many of its obstructions removed, the happiness of *the gifted few* does not in its nature admit of any material increase. Much of that happiness depends on the superiority they possess over others. The struggles for this distinction, the means of exciting high admiration, the lofty sympathies which are aroused, can never be attended with greater distinction or advantage than has already prevailed. The contrast between misery and happiness, between poverty and riches, between genius and stupidity, will never be greater than it has been. The probability is, that the distinction will be *far less;* and that "the peasant's toe will come *still nearer* the courtier's heel."—All, therefore, that was calculated to heighten happiness, by its *rarity*, and to impart a dazzling

value to acquisitions, from the *difficulty* of their attainment, and the *novelty* of their possession, will undergo rather a diminution than an increase.

Though it be difficult to describe the precise limits of the capacities of human enjoyment, scarcely any one who does not mistake an idle fancy for a solid judgment, can really come to the conclusion, that those capacities are unlimited in their power of cultivation, and indefinite in their susceptibility of improvement. These notions have evidently arisen from a spirit of enthusiasm, and they possess no facts or experience to support them. It may be, that those who entertain more moderate opinions, are considered by the enthusiastic as deficient in force of intellect—that the highest order of the faculties is indicated by creating or espousing new systems, and doubtful theories. It happens, however, that all theories cannot be true: the majority of them are false. They generally consist in selecting a few plausible circumstances —in shutting the understanding against those

which are unfavorable; and, out of a few slender materials, constructing a specious fabric, which is blown to its original nothingness by the first rough breeze that visits it. Some indeed are of a hardier growth; and, if they chance to survive the blast, the accidental escape is adduced as an argument to support their eternal immutability. It is certainly an evidence of a great mind to form a system of order and regularity out of disjointed and scattered principles; but the probability is, that such system will be fallacious, unless constructed by judgment, instead of fancy. There are, in truth, no facts to support, and no experience to justify, the belief in the doctrine of perfectibility.

CHAP. IV.

THE GENTLEMAN.

KNIGHT-ERRANT — CAVALIER — QUALITIES — TASTE — ACCOMPLISHMENTS — LEARNING — THE FINE ARTS — CONVERSATIONAL TALENT—HONOR—THE MILITARY—THE GREAT AND GRACEFUL INCOMPATIBLE.

THE GENTLEMAN.

" He is complete in manners and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a Gentleman."

SHAKSPEARE.

To the knight-errant of the age of chivalry, and the gallant loyalty of the cavaliers, has succeeded the title of " *Gentleman.*" It is difficult precisely to state what is generally comprised in this denomination of character. The perfect gentleman, or, at least, the nearest approach to perfection, is distinguished by characteristics, of which I shall attempt a sketch. He is not great, in the ordinary sense of the term. His attainments are rather numerous than lofty. He has more grace and beauty of mind, than sublimity. The quality in which he is most eminent, is *refined taste.* He is more accomplished than learned. His attainments, including all the elegant exercises of the age, consist more of the

ornamental, than the positively useful. He has too many refined avocations, to be *eminent* either in music, or the other fine arts. He is something, and avowedly but little, of an amateur. He possesses very polished manners, a mingling of ease, grace, and dignity. He is acquainted with the classics, and the fashionable modern languages. He writes elegantly, and sometimes he "lisps in numbers;" but he is not ambitious of the name either of poet or author. He is eminent in conversational brilliancy; yet he disdains the profession of a wit, and the wranglings of a disputant. His honor is as pure, though not as cold, as "the icicle on Dian's temple:" and his bravery, if it has not been proved, has at least never been questioned.

In sketching this very imperfect portrait, we should not omit to notice the military profession. The army is supposed, by some, to present the most faultless model of "the Gentleman." Its members, doubtless, generally display bravery of mind, and polish of manners: but, if the gentlemen of the army study their profession,

and the arts connected with it, with the ambition of the anticipated chieftain, it may be questioned, whether, except in exterior polish, they can attain *many* of those refined and eminent accomplishments, which belong to the man of independence and general pursuits. It may also be supposed, that the present feelings, even of an officer, are not precisely similar to the romantic sentiments of the heroes of chivalry. The steel-clad knight, followed by his own personal friends and relations, fought for the honor of knighthood, frequently in the cause of religion, and united the motives of piety, chivalry, and love. It is to be apprehended, since standing armies have been established, since the military art has become a distinct and extensive profession, and since money and patronage have purchased rank, as frequently as "high deeds of arms," much of that enthusiastic feeling, and those ennobling sentiments, that formerly distinguished the warriors of England, have degenerated.

It is a question, whether the qualities and attainments which constitute the grace and beauty

of character, are consistent with its dignity and grandeur. It appears to be a part of the great scheme of the universe, that, amidst order, should exist, not only diversity, but contrast. The calm majesty of the lofty mountain—the alternate stillness and agitated grandeur of the world of waters—the serenity of the air, succeeded by the tempest and the tornado—every thing that can please by its beauty, or astonish by its magnitude, is exhibited to the human sense. Yet, amidst this boundless expanse of objects, a distinguishing mark is set upon that which produces the impression of beauty, and that which excites an emotion of the sublime. No where is diversity and contrast found so strikingly to exist, as in the moral and intellectual character of the human race. There is the sublime in morals, and in intellect, as there is in the physical world; and the analogy of beauty is equally to be traced in its most attractive forms. The elements of each are distinct. Between them is placed a gulf, impassive as that which separated LAZARUS from DIVES. There may be some few adven-

turous birds of passage, who occasionally flit across the intervening chasm, and light alternately on the confines of both worlds. They are a species of amphibious intruders, who penetrate but little into the interior of either region. They are to be seen, like their prototypes, on the margin of the land and sea; but, on the rising and lofty eminences of the one, or the vast profundity of the other, we shall in vain endeavor to descry or trace them.

There may be an abstract possibility of the union of greatness of character, with very refined accomplishments; but the coincidence is so exceedingly rare, that, for all the purposes of reasoning and practice, we may presume them to be incompatible. Whatever may be the original disposition to greatness, the education and habits are essentially different which lead to the summit of polished attainment. It is obvious, that the train of ideas which occupies the mind of the one, is radically different from the other. The destined hero, who, in the ordinary tide of time, "peeps out but once an age," must possess

a mind occupied with the loftiest ideas. The scenes with which it should be chiefly familiar, must be grand and noble. They must be drawn from the inspiring examples of real life, or the animated delineations of the poet, the orator, and the historian. He who is chiefly attached to the displays of ornamental life, may be passed by in the catalogue of human excellence—we must not look to him for any heroic enterprize, nor for any grand or comprehensive views of human improvement.

It is worth inquiring, whether a character, adapted for the highest display of heroic virtue, might not be perverted, and perhaps destroyed, by an attempt to graft upon it a stock of the graceful and ornamental qualities. There are also characters formed by nature or accident, or perhaps by the influence of both, which appear peculiarly adapted to acquire all that is brilliant in wit and fancy, and all that is fascinating in elegancy and accomplishment. Are not these beings, however produced, by nature, accident, or habit, obviously of an opposite and uncon-

genial character, incapable of uniting in the same individual, without the destruction of the principal qualities of each? The refinements of art destroy the dignity of nature—they aspire to charm only, not to exalt. The poet, whose excellence consists in the elegance and liveliness of his imagination—the painter, whose characteristics are delicacy of touch, and brilliancy of coloring—the musician, whose strains are only melting and harmonious—can never mount to the regions of *active* heroism. The appropriate scenes of their exploits, are the enamelled lawn, the margin of the ripling stream, the shady bower, and the luxurious abodes of wealth and indolence. Even the accomplished orator, from whose public exercise we might expect better things, is lost in the very refinement and polish of his art. Witness the vain and cowardly CICERO — the bribed and fugitive DEMOSTHENES!

The diamond may be comparatively valueless without its polish; but the chief property of the diamond is its *brilliancy*. Not so the human

character. Its value is its *use;* and, if its utility be destroyed or diminished, in supplying the trappings of ornament, we sacrifice the substance to the shadow, and "vote the mantle into majesty." But

> "Not in the feather, wave it e'er so high,
> By fortune stuck, to mark us from the throng,
> Is *greatness* lodg'd."

The hero and the courtier are rarely united in the same person. No one ever mistook CHESTERFIELD for a great man—at the utmost, possessed only of *second* rate talent—in morals, something below even this. It must be allowed, however, that the accomplished gentleman, is a character of no easy attainment. If we number amongst his acquisitions a perfect acquaintance with the classic and polite languages, a knowledge of the theory and practice of music and painting, with some skill in "building the polished rhyme," and considerable proficiency in the rhetorical art; we shall perceive that no small portion of time and attention must be bestowed, beyond that which is consumed in the

acquisition of those smaller graces which complete the character.

The inference and practical result would be, that so much of the short period of mature life, and so much of devoted exertion, must be given to attain these refinements, that all higher objects must necessarily be disregarded. It is fit, then, that we distinguish between the qualities which are calculated merely to amuse, to delight, or adorn; and those which are adapted to exalt and elevate the human character. Our interest would prompt, and justice would demand, the concession of pre-eminence to those who are content to forego the flattering power of enchanting the imagination, and captivating the affections, by the shining accomplishments of a refined education; and who, amidst the buffetings of opposition and competitorship, present the noblest specimen of human greatness—of greatness which consists in the energetic exertion of every power and faculty, which unites to a resolution that is never shaken, an activity that

is never tired,—that improves the world by the exalted and active character of its goodness, and illuminates it by the comprehension and sagacity of its intellect.

CHAP. V.

EXTERNAL INDICATIONS OF CHARACTER,

CRANIOLOGY.

THREE CLASSES OF INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER—

1. EXTERNAL OBSERVATION—MATTER-OF-FACT MEN.
2. PRINCIPLES—CAUSES—PHILOSOPHERS.
3. SENSIBILITY OF MIND—IDEALITY—POETS.

THEORY OF CRANIOLOGY—CHARACTER INDICATED BY THE FORM OF THE HEAD — SITUATION OF THE ORGANS — PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

EXTERNAL INDICATIONS OF CHARACTER.

"This man's brow, like to a title-leaf,
Foretels the nature of *the internal* volume."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE mental character of human beings may be naturally divided into three classes.

They consist, first, of those who are interested only in the mere *exterior aspect* of created nature, who are curious and observant, but not speculative.

Second. Of those who delight to trace the analogies and resemblances of the phenomena of the universe, and to investigate their *causes* and *purposes*.

And, third, of those to whom all external nature, its secret springs, causes, and modes of action, are presented in a *vivid* and *exaggerated* form.

It will be generally obvious, that some minds are anxious only to ascertain facts, without inquiring into the causes that produced them. They are desirous to obtain information on a variety of subjects, but content with a superficial investigation. They are curious in the examination of the external appearance of objects; and notice, with quickness, all that passes around them. They are eager to know something of every department of art and science. This is a disposition which displays itself at a very early age. At first, as in children, who generally possess it, it is a mere feeling of *curiosity;* but, in later life, enlarges into more discriminating *observation.* The store of circumstances, thus collected, becomes often abundantly great; and, when united with verbal memory, the fortunate possessor becomes frequently brilliant, and always entertaining; and is undoubtedly happier in his splendid variety of information and pursuit, than those who devote their thoughts to one engrossing object. Such is the MATTER-OF-FACT MAN.

On the contrary, there are others, who, the instant an object is presented, employ their intellect in active endeavors to discover *the occasion of its existence*. With those who seek only the external aspect of things, the mere perception of the object satisfies. There is a perfect contentment with the mere *sight* of the phenomenon. But, with the other class, every mental power is aroused, all possible combinations and analogies are summoned to the mind's eye—the instantaneous questions are, *how is this*, and *why?* Such is the PHILOSOPHER.

Frequent instances are also observed of a remarkable aptitude in the discovery of resemblances, and the use of similitudes. An acuteness and promptitude of discrimination is evinced in the selection of examples and illustrations, which infinitely delights and instructs the mind. Instead of abstruse and logical, or abstract reasoning, we are presented with apt appeals to correspondent circumstances, which, whilst they please, naturally tend to persuade us. It is a faculty peculiarly predominant in the poet,

though it does not appear in itself to constitute poetical genius.

It is an indisputable fact, that many persons are, happily, endowed with a more poetic and enthusiastic mind, than others. With such characters every thing is described, and every thought expressed, hyperbolically. But this state of the mental temperament is *susceptibility*, not *power*, of intellect; for there are many who employ terms and phrases of high exaggeration, without displaying any poetic combinations or allusion. It is, in fact, a SENSIBILITY OF MIND, acting upon all the faculties and sentiments, and heightening and embellishing their effect. No object is perceived in a merely simple and unadorned state. The flowers, which have been gathered by the other faculties, it binds into the chaplets that adorn the brow of Parnassus—embellishing every grace and beauty, and deepening and enriching every tint and shade. When connected with some of the superior faculties, it constitutes POETICAL GENIUS.

It will not be denied, that there do exist these

different classes of mental development. *Is it then unreasonable to suppose, that these various powers should employ different instruments of action?* It has been observed, that the fact is correspondent with the conjecture. Men who predominantly display these different faculties, have been found to possess a dissimilarity externally observable in a particular portion of the forehead.

Perhaps of all the theories, physical, metaphysical, or moral, which have attempted to explain the nature of man, none has met with so general and so virulent an opposition as that of CRANIOLOGY. It was, indeed, not to be expected, that so unthought of, and so extraordinary a doctrine, as that of ascertaining the moral qualities, and intellectual powers, of human beings, by an inspection of the external form of the head, should, at once, be received without opposition.

It is unquestionable, that protuberances on the skull do exist. The phrenologist ascribes

them to the action of particular portions of the brain. And he contends, that peculiar propensities, sentiments, and talents, are marked by correspondent prominences. That the head is shaped conformably to the character; that there is a diversity of faculties, according to the different kinds of external things, in the same manner as the five senses are adapted each to the cognizance of its own peculiar object.

By this theory, we are brought nearer to the development of the grand arcanum of the mental essence. The organs of sense receive and transmit impression to the internal faculties. By the discovery of these internal faculties, we have advanced one important and essential step farther in tracing the nature of the human mind. We thus become acquainted with its agents of action, the instruments, the machinery, by which it performs its wonders. Though we cannot discern the impalpable and mighty sovereign himself; though he remains in the interior of the temple, (a temple made by no mortal hand,)

mantled in inscrutable obscurity, we are now introduced to the immediate and ministering agents of his extraordinary power.

Whatever be the nature, or elemental properties of mind, it is clear that the brain is the seat of its faculties: it is the instrument by which the mind acts; it is the organ, or collection of organs, of the intellectual powers. On the state of the brain, depends the perfection of the mind. The faculties are deranged, are suspended, or annihilated, as the brain is correspondently affected.

It is reasonable to suppose that the brain must produce *some* effect, some impression, on the skull. Consider the nature of this part of the human frame. The skull is perfectly soft, and unossified, until long after the brain has been completely formed. It becomes hard, or bony, only gradually, and by degrees. The skull, and all the ossified, as well as all the other parts of the human structure, undergo, until a late period in life, gradual and constant change and renovation. The action, therefore, of the brain,

upon a substance at first peculiarly pliant and yielding, and afterwards slowly hardened, and at all times changing and progressing, may readily be comprehended. It is reasonable to suppose, that the skull must thus, from its nature, undergo some change or modification, by the constant, the unceasing, and energetic action of the brain. *Is it then really so absurd to believe, that this action will be externally manifested?* that there will be a change or modification developed, in *proportion* to the degree of force, energy, and continuance, of the active and internal power and agency?

In proof of the separate locality of thought, or that *parts* only of the brain are employed in certain mental operations, we are referred to the relief, which every one must have felt, after long study, by a *change of subject.* Those who have been deeply engaged in the comparison of facts and events, and in tracing and investigating their relations and causes, however wearied by the application, will find the fatigue removed, by turning to the contemplation of a different

branch of study:—to the avocations, for instance, of the artist or the musician. As well might we suppose, that all the fibres of the body are employed in every instance of muscular action, as that the whole brain is essential to the performance of every act of thought. By a change of corporeal exercise, by substituting the ride for the walk, the pain of the wearied muscles is removed, by the employment of others. A change of the exercise of the mind is followed by a resembling effect; and the inference is, that it is occasioned also by a change of organ, or instrument of action.

Again, it is deduced, that certain parts of the brain are necessary to the performance of many of the functions of the mind, by the fact of partial loss of power by external injury, by madness, or disease; and it is argued, if the entire brain acted simultaneously and collectively, in every mental operation, the injury of a part of it would only affect its *general power*, and not any *specific function*. All the faculties would be, in some degree, impaired, but *none* of them pecu-

liarly. Now the contrary of this is the fact; for sometimes the memory of *names* is destroyed, whilst that of *ideas* remains. The mere recollection of *facts* may be weakened, but the general *inferences* continue immutable.

If the whole mass of the brain were essential to the performance of every mental act, it would seem also reasonable to conclude, that the different faculties would be equal. Yet nothing is more certain, than that these faculties are possessed in many various degrees. In some, the *inventive* faculties are predominant: in others, *observation.* Some persons are acquainted with almost every thing; but seldom *reflect:* whilst many are absorbed in their own thoughts, and live in an *ideal world.*

It is generally allowed, that the countenance presents *some* INDEX TO THE MIND; and that its state indicates, in *some* degree, at least, the general character of the feelings to which the individual is subjected, and the mental faculties which he possesses. It appears reasonable that this should be so. The muscles of the face are,

perhaps, in more constant activity, and often of agitation, than any other part of the human structure. Their proximity to the brain may account for the fact. We are all aware, that many passions, to which man is subjected, are of an *intense nature;* and that they produce, invariably, a correspondent rigidity of the fibrous system. Anger, hatred, and jealousy, excited courage, and emulation in warlike enterprize; in proportion to the vehemence with which they are felt, exhibit themselves externally, and brace up the whole system to a high state of intensity. SHAKSPEARE has finely and naturally pourtrayed the effect of these feelings on the human countenance:—

" In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favor'd rage,
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect."

——" Let the brow o'erwhelm it,
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean."

On the contrary, the passions of grief, of fear, and scorn, relax the muscles, and present a *languid* appearance in the countenance. Is it not reasonable to infer, as well as consistent with the facts we know, that in proportion to the violence, to the frequency, and the duration of these passions, so will the countenance become affected? Who, that is accustomed to any degree of observation, can mistake between the sanguine and choleric character; and the melancholy and phlegmatic?

Thus far it appears the system of PHYSIOGNOMY, which, to a certain extent, has been long received in the world, tends to confirm, by analogy, the theory we are investigating. Physiognomy asserts, that the moral character may be ascertained by the countenance. Phrenology advances a step farther, and points to *the source* where moral action has its rise.

So also, in the intellectual department of physiognomy, almost every observant person has remarked the amplitude of the summit of the forehead, to be indicative of intellectual power.

Who indeed can doubt, that there must be an external and manifest difference in the aspect of intelligence and stupidity!—That the poet will present a countenance and a brow essentially variant, when nicely scanned, from that of "the clod of the valley."—That between the ample index to the mind of SHAKSPEARE, and the blank table of contents of the lowest of the species, there must be an apparent and a striking dissimilarity!

There are some parts of the science of physiognomy, which evidently intrude upon the peculiar province of phrenology. According to the rules of the former system, and the observations of its disciples, we are instructed, that *the eye-bone*, when firm, compact, and moderately prominent, denotes great strength of mind, much sagacity, and resolution: and that, when it completely overhangs the eye, it does not indicate power of intellect, or greatness of soul. We learn also, from the same system, that *the forehead*, lengthened and narrow, indicates a weak mind. That the shorter, the closer, and more compact it is,

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the firmer and more concentrated the character.

It is rather an impeachment on the philosophical character of the physiognomist, that no enquiry is made into *the causes* of the manifest differences in the shape and dimensions of the human brow. The fact is stated, but no inquiry is instituted, how, or why it exists? In the language of the system, we may venture to assume, that their *organ of causality* was not very prominently manifested! Phrenology would tell them, that the eye-bone and the forehead are developed according to the action of the brain within, through the agency of its organic structure.

Such is the brief and general view of this curious theory. (*c*) It does not belong to the present design to enter extensively into the consideration of the details of the subject; yet a glance may be taken at a *few of the leading particulars*.

It is obvious, that the senses are insufficient to account for the power exercised by the skilful

sculptor. It must be apparent to the reflection of every one, that the best eyes and hands, the most correct vision, and the finest touch, do not give the power to discriminate and represent the perfection of FORM. Is it not reasonable to infer, therefore, that the diversity of skill in different artists, is occasioned by the different degrees in which some peculiar internal faculty is possessed?

The power of discriminating COLOUR is not in proportion to the sense of sight. It is known that some distinguish the figure and distance of objects correctly, but cannot perceive the minute shades of their hue. This difference of visual aptitude, can only be accounted for by the difference of internal power. Now the practical phrenologists inform us, they have discovered, in persons remarkable for the possession, or the want, of these peculiar faculties, a correspondent difference in the form of that part of the skull, which is above, and on the inner side of, the eye.

Again: amongst mankind in general, there is

no faculty of the mind existing in such various degrees, as the power of CALCULATION. There are some who can perform the most complicated processes, almost instantaneously; and, apparently, without thought. Some of those persons are mere children; but they have, in the science of numbers, a power and facility, unattainable by others, who possess the general intellectual powers, perhaps, in a far superior degree.

Next may be mentioned the faculty of perceiving melody in sounds. Nothing is more certain, than that the mere perfection of the sense of hearing does not give, what is called, a MUSICAL EAR. The organ of calculation, or number, and some of the higher faculties, may be necessary for comprehending the theory of music, and giving perfection to musical genius; but it is this organ, only, that is necessary for the enjoyment of melody.

There is a remarkable power, possessed by some persons, of acquiring and using arbitrary signs, not confined to oral discourse, but applicable to all ARTIFICIAL SYMBOLS. Languages, those

at least which are spoken, are of course learned by the ear; but it is not the acuteness of that organ which qualifies us to acquire them; for many are unable to learn a language, without the greatest difficulty; although the auricular sense be eminently perfect. Again: it is the observation of every one, that some have much greater facility in speaking, and in remembering names and words, than others. From their lips, language flows instantaneously, and without effort: whilst, with others, though the ideas may be distinct and rapid, words are with difficulty produced. Some can readily repeat whatever they have heard or read; and this verbal memory is peculiarly useful in society. It sometimes gives the reputation of great cleverness, though the possessor may, in reality, be destitute of any great or general intellectual power: and those who are without this fluency, however gifted with talent, or replete with knowledge, appear slow, dull, and insipid, when unblessed with a correspondent power of expression.

Persons of nice observation are able to detect

a sensible difference in the exterior appearance of those who are distinguished by pre-eminence in these faculties of calculation, of music, and language.

There are various SENTIMENTS, incident to the nature of human beings, the existence of which appear to be so well established, that their description is found in the language of all nations. They consist of *veneration*, of *hope*, of *conscientiousness*, of *firmness*, of *benevolence*, of *self-esteem*, and of *cautiousness*.

It does not appear unreasonable to suppose, that persons in whom these sentiments exist, should present some *external indication*, by which their several degrees may be known. It is obvious, that they who possess a combination of firmness and hope, will exhibit a very different character, both mental and moral, from those in whom fickleness and fear are predominant. The benevolent will present a different aspect from the selfish—the conscientious, from the covetous. The proud can never be confounded with the humble. Is it absurd then to believe, that those

characteristics, which are ascertained by the first inspection of the countenance, should also impress some indication of their nature on the very region of their source? It is the brain that is the seat of every thought; and its constant action on the skull must naturally produce a correspondent effect. "The drop hollows the stone, not by its force, but by the frequency of its falling."

Passing from the intellectual faculties and moral sentiments, it will be sufficient to take a very slight glance at the PROPENSITIES which belong to human nature. In the early ages of mankind, and even occasionally at every stage of civilization, there have existed some violent qualities, which men unfortunately partake in common with the brute creation. Amongst these are *courage*, and a disposition to seek *revenge*. It is not to be disputed, that many are fond of the excitement of the combat, and eager to destroy. Nor can it be contested, that some are remarkable for *cunning:* or, that others appear habitually inclined to forget that injunction of the

decalogue, which says, "Thou shalt not *covet!*"

In this branch of the subject, we are aided by the analogy of animals. Between the meek and peaceable, such as the sheep and pigeon, contrasted with the carnivorous and ferocious class, such as the vulture and tiger, there is a striking difference, not merely in the general aspect, but in those particular portions of the head, which correspond in situation with human beings. The outward appearance of the two classes are distinguished, indeed, from each other, by the most careless observer. We never mistake the timid and diffident, for the bold and fearless; and experience has shewn, that there are external elevations and depressions on the posterior sides of the head, in the situations where the brain on these occasions appears predominantly to be active or deficient.

To the imperfect sketch, thus presented, of the general principles of the theory, may concisely be added a statement of the SITUATION OF THE ORGANS.

The faculties of perception, or those which are destined to ascertain the forms, colours, situation, and external appearance, of objects; in other words, all those whose office it is *to see*, are stationed near to, or in the region of, the eyes.

The faculties of reflection are across the superior part of the forehead.

Thus, with a consistency agreeable to what we might, by reasoning, have anticipated, those internal powers which receive and operate upon the impressions conveyed by the visual sense, are placed in the appropriate dominion of the eye, across the lower part of the brow. Whilst, above them, are ranged all those faculties which are destined *to reflect and reason* upon the materials supplied by the subordinate organs.

The situation of *the moral sentiments*, is upon the upper part, or top, of the head: benevolence being in the centre, immediately above the superior faculties—veneration, still more elevated—firmness, as the key-stone that binds the moral fabric, at the crown—and conscientiousness on each side.

The propensities, or lower faculties, which are possessed by man, in common with many of the brute tribe, are consigned, in due and humble subordination, to the rear of the cranium.

There are perhaps none, even among the decided opponents of this theory, who do not allow that the form of the head has some degree of correspondence with the intellectual character. Place the man of grand and elevated intellect on the one hand, and the born ideot on the other, and no one can mistake between them.

> " Look here, upon this picture, and on this—
> See what a grace is seated on this brow,
> The front of Jove himself:
> A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god doth seem to set his seal,
> To give the world assurance of a man."
> ——" Look you now what follows:"—

Instead of the ample brow, under which reposes all the high and noble faculties, there is indeed " the *counterfeit* presentment " of a human being—an almost brainless structure—a forehead, retreating nearly to flatness, and

exhibiting a total deficiency in that almost perpendicular line, which invariably marks the highest order of intellectual character.

That there is some degree of correspondence between the form of the head, and the mental or moral character, appears indisputable. *What that degree is*, seems to be the only question.

In proceeding to consider the PRINCIPAL GROUNDS OF OPPOSITION to this theory, we may commence with those who declare, that they have never yet known what it is to feel, that they think by means of their brains. The organ of intellect may reside, say they, in some other part of the nervous system, or in some other region of the body! *

Upon the anatomical or physiological department of the subject, it may be presumptuous for one, *not of the faculty*, to hazard an opinion; but no doctrine can possibly be more startling, than that the *seat of intellect is not in the head*, but in some other part of the body. It may not be

* The Edinburgh reviewers.

easy to put into the shape of argument, the proof of a self-evident proposition. It may, however, be said, though certainly unnecessarily, that in all the millions of individuals, who from disease, or accident, have suffered amputation, or the loss of sensibility, almost all portions of the human frame, *except the head and heart,* have been destroyed, or become torpid: and since *thought,* in all those instances, has still remained, we must obviously conclude, that it had no residence in those annihilated regions of the frame. There is a pretty general notion, that the head *is* the seat, and the brain, the organ, of thought; and until its abode is *otherwise* ascertained, we must be content to believe that opinion true. It is, at least, *more likely,* and appears to be more proper, that we should *use our brains for the purpose of thinking,* than *any other* portion of the human structure.

Some deny, that there is the slightest approach to an uniform proportion or connexion between the vigor of intellect, or the strength or peculiarity of inclinations in man, and the size of

the brain. Intellect, it is asserted, of *every degree*, and inclination of every variety, is found combined with BRAINS OF ALL SIZES!*

This, at least, is a bold expression—"not the *slightest approach*,"—brains of all sorts and sizes are equally good! It would have been more gratifying and satisfactory, if these assertions had been supported by some reference to well-known instances. If it could have been pointed out, that one man, of indisputable talent, possessed a brain most *magnificently disproportionate*; and another, equally endowed in intellect, carried a peculiarly *diminutive* and portable pericranium; and, if a third could be produced, of *ordinary* dimensions, utterly destitute of mental power, then indeed might the system have justly become the derision of the world. But it happens, that nearly twenty years have elapsed since the theory was first promulgated by Dr. GALL,—and, within the last seven or eight years, the subject has undergone very general discussion. Although,

* The Edinburgh reviewers.

comparatively, there are few supporters of the doctrine; there are, of the reading and scientific public, still fewer, who have not heard of its general nature and pretensions; and it is consequently remarkable, that *in all this time*, and *amidst all these discussions, no instances have been adduced effectually to overthrow the theory;* and especially nothing whatever has been shewn to prove, that the faculties may remain entire after the brain has been greatly injured.

It was, with a good humoured facetiousness, enquired of Dr. SPURZHEIM, whether he had discovered any organ of COMMON SENSE; and he replied in the negative. It was then enquired, in what that quality consisted; and the answer was, that it depended on the balance of power between the organs.* The investigation of this point will tend considerably to explain, and to support, the system. Nothing is so useful or so important as the possession of that state of general sentiment, which is denominated Com-

* Mr. Abernethy.

mon Sense. Although there are numberless instances of its display in the general concerns of life, and although its regulations are established, and its requisitions adjusted, by the action of *a common interest in society;* yet nothing is more rare than its constant exhibition by *the same individual.* Though each brings into the common stock some portion of this invaluable commodity, scarcely a single person is able, undeviatingly, to practise it; some one faculty or sentiment unfortunately predominates over the rest, sweeping away in its career prudential considerations. Thus it is, we often perceive men of the finest talents, and the most generous and lofty sentiments, completely destitute of this humble, but invaluable, quality.

Again, in the same spirit, it was asked, whether there was any organ of SELF-CONTROL; and the reply was, that it depended on, and was the result of, predominating motive.* Thus justice may control avarice; and avarice, sensuality.

* Mr. Abernethy.

The power by which persons of impetuous character are sometimes able to stem the tide of their feelings, is by the aid of some opposite power or sentiment. In short, it appears a self-evident proposition, that "*control*" must depend on that power which we are enabled to place, or which naturally is placed, in predominance and supremacy, over the others. Whether we can effect this, at our own pleasure, unaided by some inscrutable and paramount intelligence, is a question which is not now necessary to examine.

One of the objections to this theory, and one of the principal and favorite topics of ridicule by its opponents, is founded on the EXTRAORDINARY NUMBER of the faculties, sentiments, and propensities. It has appeared to the minds of many as a very laughable circumstance, that in the small region of a man's pericranium, there should be discovered no less than *thirty-three* or *thirty-four* organs of thought or feeling! Now, in the first place, there is a mistake in this statement or description of the theory,—the intellectual faculties, including both the perceptive and

reflective, are only *positively* represented to be *ten* in number, though there are five others which are *conjectural;* and as, according to some eminent metaphysicians, there are no less than *seven* distinct powers or faculties of the mind, the disproportion in numerical force, according to the old and new systems, is not very considerable. The sentiments are, in the new system, described, or inferred, to be *nine.* According to the most approved authors, they are allowed to be precisely equal, and to consist of faith, hope, charity, benevolence, generosity, gratitude, justice, prudence, and moderation.

The propensities, according to the phrenological system, consist also of *nine* in number. The physiologists, moralists, and metaphysicians, who have hitherto received the general homage of the republic of letters, have enumerated about the same quantity, under the appellations of love, friendship, avarice, selfishness, hatred, anger, jealousy, fear, grief, and I know not how many subordinate modifications; and, with Dr. JOHNSON, therefore, one might exclaim

on this topic, "*Where's the merriment?*" Supposing even that phrenology laid claims to the discovery of primitive or original faculties and feelings, *greater in number* than before admitted, can that constitute any rational objection? The ancient chemists allowed only four elemental substances to exist. The moderns have proved, by experiment, there are at least forty. The ludicrous number of the faculties, sentiments, and propensities, does not therefore appear to be very conclusive. Indeed, in most instances, the theory has been condemned for what does not really belong to it. Persons of wit, and of facetious talent, and who generally deal *more in ridicule than in reasoning*, indulge their propensity by associating, fancifully, certain ludicrous images, which have no real or essential connexion with the subject; and thus are enabled, successfully, to raise the thoughtless laugh. They deride the absurdity of their own creation. Ridicule, however, rarely, if ever, can be the test of truth; and many things are indisputably true, which may easily be rendered ludicrous.

The doctrine is rejected by many, because they are unable to *satisfy themselves of its truth*, by their own immediate and PRACTICAL experiments. It is not to be disputed, from the very nature of the subject, that great skill and experience are requisite, to enable any one to assume the office of a practical craniologist. But such an admission cannot form the slightest argument against the *truth* of the general principle. We do not despise the demonstrations of chemical science, because it is not in the power of every one to attest their accuracy, by his own personal experiment; and, *à fortiori*, might we reject all metaphysical systems, and many other sciences and arts, which are difficult of attainment, and hitherto have only been compassed by a few.

It is obvious, that the EXCEPTIONS which may be adduced, if they really exist, cannot overthrow the general system. It is reasonable to suppose, that the circumstances on which those exceptions depend, elude observation only from being unknown; and that an accurate knowledge of

their real nature, and of all their concomitants, might enable us to reconcile the *apparent* inconsistences, in perfect accordance with the general principles of the system.

It has been objected, that this doctrine is connected with MATERIALISM: but that objection is founded on mistake. It supposes that the organs of the faculties, described by phrenology, are *the faculties themselves*; that the mind, in fact, consists of these organs, and *of nothing else*. This is one of the proofs, that a large portion of the opponents of the system, do not condescend to *understand*, before they *condemn* it. The theory has no further connexion with the doctrine of materialism, than any former metaphysical theory. It contends merely, that the mind acts by an organic system, previously undiscovered; and that it cannot act without that system. It does not presume to enquire into the first cause, or prime mover of thoughts and actions: it leaves that question precisely where it was, and where, probably, it will ever remain.

It has also been said, that Craniology, if true, establishes FATALISM; and that, as fatalism is false, the theory, inseparable from it, must be false also.—Now, this again marks the philosophic attention with which the theory has been considered by its antagonists. *It is not* contended, that the organs of the sentiments and propensities act self-willed, and *un*impelled by circumstances. Nothing more is contended, than that the existence of these organs prove the inclination, *the tendency*, or disposition, to perform certain actions: and does not every one feel conscious, to some, at least, of these peculiar dispositions; and is he not perfectly convinced, that they vary in different individuals? When the tendencies are strong, is it not felt, that it requires all the exertions and vigilance of the higher faculties to restrain the tendency? Still these organic dispositions must have their producing and exciting causes; and phrenology no more asserts the absurdity of their *self-action*, than the most rational philosopher asserts that

actions can be performed without motives, or that an effect can exist without a previous cause.

If this theory be true, EDUCATION, it is said, would be useless; because it is not shewn that we are able to reduce or amplify the organs. The theory, however, does not suppose, that the predominant organs are necessarily active; it admits that they are excited by external causes and circumstances; and so far from its being true, that the phrenologists think education unavailing, Dr. SPURZHEIM has lately written an elaborate work, *to prove* that nothing can be more *important than an attention to education*, in regulating the degree and direction of sensibility. In the statement also of the very Theory itself, we find the following propositions:—

"It appears that several of the faculties manifest themselves from infancy—that others appear later—that several disappear earlier—and others last till the end of life. That these varieties

may be accounted for by different degrees of excitement, which have acted upon the organs of sensation."*

Again, it is contended, that the proposed mode of judging of another's character, is unjust, and may frequently be productive of erroneous and injurious conclusions; and that nothing but MISCHIEF would follow its becoming generally known and accredited.†

That our judgment upon character, both mental and moral, will probably be often erroneous, cannot be disputed. There must necessarily be many mistakes; and it is not reasonable to expect that this science will form an exception to all others, and attain unerring perfection. It may be lamented, but it is no objection to the excellence of the *medical art*, that it is unable to eradicate every disease, or to relieve every complaint. There is, in fact, in every comprehensive system, instances of difficulty, that are not readily overcome, and for a long time baffle

* Dr. Spurzheim. † Mr. Abernethy.

the most industrious exertion. But whatever errors may be committed, it may fairly be demanded, whether they *can* exceed in number those which arise from *our present method of* estimating character? Our general opinions are at present formed from the knowledge of a *few* only of a person's actions, and frequently in complete ignorance of the circumstances, and of the motives, under which they were performed. That the knowledge of the system, *admitting its truth*, can be injurious or mischievous, it seems impossible to allow. The belief in an irrevocable doom, supposing that doom evil, and unchangeable, by any exertions of our own, would be pernicious. But no such doctrine is taught by this theory, and cannot be shewn to belong to it. It is, indeed, a somewhat remarkable position, to assert that the knowledge of truth can be pernicious. Generally, if not universally, *the knowledge of truth must be salutary;* and no arguments have yet been stated to shew, that phrenology is an exception to the general rule. (*d*)

To sum up, it will be observed, that the general proposition advanced by the theory is,—that the moral qualities and intellectual powers of human beings can be ascertained by an inspection of the external form of the head. That the station of the perceptive faculties is in the region of the eye—of the superior faculties, on the summit of the brow—of the sentiments, on the crown of the head—and the propensities behind. That, as the organs of sense merely transmit impressions to the internal faculties, the discovery of those faculties is a step farther in tracing the nature of that wonderful essence—*the mind of man.* That the brain is the seat of all the powers, moral and intellectual. That the faculties are seated in peculiar portions of the brain, as the congeries of organs or instruments by which all mental phenomena are performed. That, on the state, and in proportion to the size and the activity of the brain, depend the perfection, the suspension, the derangement, or the annihilation of mind. That, the skull, being ductile till long after the brain is formed, becoming ossified

by degrees, and constantly undergoing change and renovation, till a late stage of life, it is consequently modified and manifested in proportion to the degree of force, of energy, and of the continued action of the brain; and, in the result, these operations present a form of head consistent with the mental and moral character of the individual.

Such is the system, supported, it would seem, by the evidence of indisputable facts, exhibited in numerous instances, gathered from all parts of the globe. The living have been scrutinized in action, and the dead have been dissected. Collections have been formed of the skulls of all nations. The experience of men of science has testified in favor of the Theory, and the reasonings of many able authors have successfully supported it.

CHAP. VI.

THE POET.

EARLY STAGE OF POETRY—CRITERION OF TRUE POETRY—THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF POETRY — DESCRIPTIVE — MORAL — INTELLECTUAL — THE HIGHEST SPECIES — ITS SOURCES — NATURE — HUMAN ACTION AND CHARACTER — PASSION — SENTIMENT — POETICAL LANGUAGE — EPITHET — RHYME — VERBAL TRANSPOSITION—MELODY.

GRADATIONS OF THE POETICAL CHARACTER:

1. ARTIFICIAL ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS, WITHOUT POETRY OR RHYME — VERSIFICATION WITHOUT POETRY — DIDACTIC.
2. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE—POETLINGS.
3. IMAGERY OF THOUGHT.
4. MORAL BEAUTY AND SUBLIMITY.
5. INTELLECT ENTHRONED IN IMAGINATION.

THE POET.

" A muse of fire that would ascend
The highest heaven of invention."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE chief object of poetry is *amusement.* The poet, wrapt in the visions of his creative fancy, seldom condescends either to inform or to instruct. He leaves the drudgery of these offices to the prosing moralist, and the dull philosopher. The poet is the same being in all ages. Morals may improve, and philosophy may advance; but the essentials of poetry were discovered with the first movements of human genius. It has been frequently observed, that men composed poetry before they composed prose. The fact is interesting; because it bears the stamp and impress of our intellectual nature, in its very earliest development. The wild energies of the untaught mind, could not stoop to the prosing construction

of elaborate sentences. Mankind were at first necessarily and essentially poetic. With them, all was creative. Each word was a metaphor, and every sentence figurative. They were unshackled by rules, unawed by criticism, and free from the servility of imitation. They uttered the unstudied raptures of nature, with all the fire and the freshness of the spring of life. To native energy, was added the charm of novelty. No anticipation went before—no calculating critic followed in the rear. The inspirations they poured forth, were fresh as the air they breathed—animated as the vital spirit by which they were excited.

This rude sketch will apply only to *a few individuals*. All were not poets—they could not be so. It was *the few* who led the way into the wild regions of fancy. The multitude followed the footsteps of Genius, and were content to admire, to learn, and imitate. Genius is *rare*. It is as the small rill in the wide desert—like the wild myrtle on the desolate heath. Its progress resembles the flight of the eagle. It pos-

sesses its ken and its ardor. It would soar above earth's canopy, and overleap the impassive bounds of the universe. Of all the sons of men, of all the race of human existence, the poet presents the most undoubted claims to the possession of the loftiest faculties. His frenzied eye creates unknown worlds, and presents to the wonder and the gaze of mankind a spark of that omnipotent and stupendous intelligence, which called this illimitable being into existence.

Some of the boldest and most impassioned flights of the imagination, may be discerned in a state of human existence, comparatively, rude and uncivilized; but all the exquisite polish and harmony of which this beautiful faculty of the mind is capable, requires the development of happier periods, and all those charms which have been accumulated by the associated feelings of ages—all those allusions which transport us to other times, and enable us "to live o'er each scene," are unknown, or dimly pictured, to the uncultivated imagination. The ideas which filled the minds, and peopled the fancies, of the

rude bards of the woods, compared with later periods, were few in number. The chase, or the battle; feats of dexterity, and of heroism, would be their themes. The "cloud-capt" hills and mountains, would be celebrated as the scene of their exploits. The fall of waters, and the ocean's roar; the tempest, and the storm, would excite ideas of grandeur and sublimity. And the imagination, so far as respects its strength, would attain a rapid perfection.

It is a subject of much congratulation, that the leading poets of Great Britain have now reverted, in a considerable degree, to the standard of Nature. They have left the little prettinesses of versification, and mounted to the true regions of their lofty calling. One of the peculiarities which characterizes the productions of the eminent poets of the present age, consists in engrafting, upon some "wild and wondrous" tale, all the charms of poetry and versification. They are thus enabled to exhibit a combination of all that is interesting in romance, with all that is sublime and beautiful in poetry; and they

engage the attention of two classes of readers—the admirers of the beautiful in language and imagery, and the lovers of romantic adventure and fictitious narrative.

This peculiarity is an improvement in the poetic art. When the incidents selected appeal not to the *local*, but the *general* sympathies of our nature, and when the beauties of poetry are not made subordinate to the story, but the latter formed into a vehicle in which the other is borne along, the effect is at once heightened and assisted. The production then combines an appeal to the refinements of taste in its poetic structure; and an appeal to the sympathetic feelings, in the moral incidents upon which it is founded.

In tracing the elements of poetical composition, there is one unerring TEST by which the presence, or the absence, OF TRUE POETIC FIRE may always be ascertained; and that is, *the effect it has upon the human feelings and faculties*. If they remain unexcited—if the mind be not elevated, if no chord of emotion has been struck, we

may call it stilted prose, or versified nonsense—but it possesses no true germ of "the art divine."

THE HIGHEST SPECIES OF POETRY is that which excites the most exalted and sublime emotions and ideas; and these are produced by the vivid and glowing description of *objects of grandeur*, associated with deep *moral feeling*, and profound *intellectual reflection*. It may, in other words, be said to be the union of descriptive with moral and intellectual poetry. Its subjects are *nature*, in all its varied beauty and sublimity; *human action*, in its most heroic achievements; *human character*, in its most exalted and diversified exhibitions; *passion*, or enthusiasm, in its utmost energy; *sentiment*, in its most ennobling characters; *thought*, in its powerful and infinite range. All these presented in language, figurative, dignified, and harmonious.

It will be found, that, in order to produce that effect, which is the object of the highest poetry, not only the moral and the intellectual, but also the descriptive, must be poetically combined and commingled together.

The DESCRIPTIVE includes a representation chiefly of the physical universe, both in repose and in agitation. That which is descriptive of the inanimate part of it, cannot long be interesting to human beings unless elevated by high intellectual conceptions, or varied by the touching representations of moral emotion. We may be pleased for the moment, by being reminded, in smooth language, and harmonious diction, of the fertile valley, and the rippling stream; of the barren wild, and the falling cataract; of "antres vast, and deserts wild, rough quarries, rocks and hills." But, unless these localities are peopled by the living world, and bound by the ties of mortal sympathy, the heart grows sick of the ungenial solitude; and, notwithstanding all our love for the verdant lawn, and the luxuriant foliage, the mind becomes "tired of the diurnal scene."

Descriptive poetry has often, however, a wider range. The vast universe—all, except our own terrestrial habitation, and its revolving adjuncts —appears to repose in a sublime stillness. Its

eternal rest, its immensity, its grandeur, stand in awful contrast with the agitations of the human globe. But, without that contrast, these incidents would lose incalculably their power of exciting interest.

Sublimity is excited also by the wide-sweeping *agitation* of the elements; by the howling of the storm; by the waving of the forest, to the eye interminable; by the boundless congregation of waters, rolling wave o'er wave. Nature, therefore, even unconnected with the presence of human beings, is capable, in description, of producing an emotion of the sublime. By the power of the poet, the imagination is furnished with all the circumstances which belong to the scene, and which present it vividly to the mind. The truth we may suspect, however, is, that although the poet makes no allusion to *man*, as a beholder, or a victim, of the agitated elements; yet, such are the principles and feelings of the human heart, that we unconsciously, and instantly, imagine ourselves the spectators of the scene, and are affected in proportion to the vividness with

which the illusion occupies the mind. If the poet has successfully drawn the picture of his own emotions, they are, by subtle transmission, conveyed to the breast and the minds of others. The celebrated representation, by Lord BYRON, of a storm on the Lake of Geneva, and its neighbouring mountains, will illustrate this proposition.

In viewing the external aspect of the world, the sentiment of the sublime is increased by the *solitude* in which the beholder is circumstanced. Placed amidst scenes of vastness and of grandeur, the heart is more deeply affected when entirely alone. The attention becomes more deep, and the impression more intense. No voice disturbs the repose, or intrudes on the solemnity of the silent scene.

Emotions are also excited by descriptions of the works of art; but these, it will be found, depend more on peculiar *associations*, than the descriptions of the works of Nature. Lord BYRON, speaking of Rome, exclaims:

" The NIOBE of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe:
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago:
The SCIPIOS' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old TIBER! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!"

The unlettered mind, ignorant of historic lore—of the fabled tradition of her who was "*all tears*"—of the illustrious associations connected with the very name of Rome; unacquainted with the achievements and the character of the SCIPIOS; with the "troubled Tiber," and Rome's marble monuments; would listen indeed in admiration to this splendid language, but not with the emotion of the classic scholar. To relish the works of art, requires not only sensibility, but cultivation. To be impressed with the beauties and the sublimities of Nature, asks only sensibility.

Descriptive poetry is not always confined to the external world. Its province may be to

describe the transactions of mankind; but, in that case, it is more properly denominated *narrative*. But, even here, it may want those touches of genius, which alone can give vibration to moral sympathy. Such is the case when the poet injudiciously selects either *ordinary* life, in its mere actual and familiar aspects, unelevated by imagination, and unsoftened by the graceful or the pathetic; or when he depicts *impossible* life, or even highly *improbable*; when the deeds he records are merely marvellous, and in which, by no illusion of the fancy, can we place ourselves in a kindred station.

MORAL POETRY is, of course, that which peculiarly addresses itself to the feelings of the human heart, and aims to arouse the benevolent and sympathetic affections. Moral poetry, in its highest and purest state, possesses too much of pathos. It is not, and ought not, to be the purpose of poetry, to inflict continued and unmitigated distress. Occasional passages, like the passing cloud, like the genial shower, or the refreshing dew, bestow an interesting contrast,

and excite a delightful emotion. But, when the pathetic flows on from page to page, in unrelieved portraitures of grief and of woe, the heart becomes pained by the high-wrought throb, instead of being only gently agitated by the mild and melancholy "joy of grief."

INTELLECTUAL POETRY, as distinguished from the others, may be said to possess a more striking aspect of thought and reflection. An aspect of deep philosophy, disclosed by the force of imagination, furnishing some of the profoundest materials of poetry; and, when happily clothed in appropriate splendor, and animated by the aid of the poet's fire, filling and expanding the mind with boundless and sublime conceptions. It may, however, frequently be too refined and metaphysical, for the general ear; and excite neither the emotion of the sublime, nor the conception of the beautiful. It may reduce thought to its arbitrary sign, or record some subtle sentiment on the page; and it may be deficient in those spirit-stirring elements, which constitute the essence of the poet's fire. It may

appeal to the understanding, and satisfy the judgment; or, it may abound in witty and learned conceits, which dazzle or perplex, but neither agitate or interest.

NATURE, in all its diversified and multiform beauty and grandeur, is the principal and exhaustless fountain from which the poet draws the largest share of his delightful and affecting elements. Nature is, as it were, the stage on which is performed the grand drama of human life. It furnishes the sublime and appropriate scenery: it gives "the *local habitation*" of illustrious enterprize. How infinitely more poetical are those events which have transpired on the great arena of Nature, than in the petty confines of human structure! Those combats that have decided even the fate of nations, but which have been achieved under the walls of crowded cities, however important in history, stand in diminished lustre on the poet's page. How different is the emotion excited by an allusion to a battle won at some town or fortress, and the illustrious associations connected with the straits

of THERMOPOLÆ, and the plains of MARATHON—with the streams of the GRANICUS, the RUBICON, and the RHINE, or the majestic ALPS, scaled by the genius of HANNIBAL! The achievements of mankind impart, indeed, an interest to these scenes; and they, at the same moment, receive an elevation from the mighty theatre on which they are performed. The associations of each, mingle and elevate the other—a consideration which will probably determine the much-agitated question, whether Art or Nature more supplies the charm of poetical allusion. It is derived from *both sources;* and is the more perfect in its effect, and more complete in its success, when *both* are included. It will sometimes occur, that the one class of imagery, consistently with the nature of the subject, predominates over the other; but, except occasionally, neither should be wholly absent.

That HUMAN ACTION AND CHARACTER, in their most heroic aspects, have ever formed some of the great bases of the highest order of poetical composition, will be at once perceived, when we

refer to the nature of *the epic poem.* Addressed to human beings, it is natural that they should be the most deeply interested in all that is felt and performed, by *beings resembling themselves*—in whose situations they can imagine themselves placed, and by whose impulses they may conceive themselves guided.

PASSION, or enthusiasm, in its utmost energy, is the most essential of all those materials with which the composition of a poem is constructed. Indeed, to arouse the feelings of others, we must strongly feel ourselves, and express, with appropriate and truthful energy, our own emotions. It is, perhaps, *this* element, correctly defined, which constitutes, figuratively, "*the poet's eye.*" It is by this he perceives every object with vividness, with energy, and elevation. By this, he becomes susceptible to all impressions of the graceful and the grand, of the sublime and the symetrical. And it is thus he is fitted to please and to affect the minds and hearts of others, by the representation of his own vivid perceptions and emotions.

SENTIMENT, in its most exalted character, is ever a concomitant of elevated poetry. It is a compound of the mental and moral—the blending of intellect and affection. Though sometimes used as synonimous to *opinion*, it is, in poetry, at least, combined with something more. Opinion is a mere intellectual impression; but sentiment adds to that impression an emotion of the heart; and thus it is that a fine sentiment includes taste, thought, and feeling. It is, as it were, a comprehensive inference deduced by the mind, and graphically presented by the hand of refinement, upon our earthly condition, character, and feelings.

Thus we see, at once, how the conviction and the feeling of treachery, are depicted in these beautiful and touching lines:

> "Oh! colder than the wind that freezes,
> Founts that but now in sunshine play'd,
> Is that congealing pang which seizes
> The trusting bosom, when betray'd."*

However magnificent, even separately considered, are all these illustrious materials, to

* Moore's Lalla Rookh.

which imperfect allusion has thus been made; it still remains that we advert to the machinery by which t' ey are elevated into their appropriate station, to the composition by which they are cemented, and the light and shade by which they are emblazoned and brought forward.

Proceed we then to consider the LANGUAGE in which these scattered elements are presented and adorned. The properties of poetical language have been described to be *figure*, *dignity*, and *harmony*.

THE EPITHET, in the structure of poetical language, is the most important of all. Its felicitous use constitutes the principal element in all that charms in expression. The noun substantive is, doubtless, essential—it may be said to constitute the *bony structure;* as the verb is the vital principle of the sentence.—But it is the epithet which supplies all properties and qualities, which gives fulness to the form, elevates it into majesty, graces it with beauty, and adorns it with simplicity or with splendor. Erase but from the poetic page all the graphic touches

effected by this philological instrument, and you deprive it totally of its character, and reduce it almost to the level of inanimate prose. The remains of rhythmus, and the pomp of transposition, may preserve the passage in some degree from prosaic tameness; but it shrinks into the skeleton of what it was.

The following quotation, it is scarcely possible to deprive utterly of beauty and interest; but it will be readily perceived how inferior it would become by the destruction of the expressive and well-chosen epithets, with which it abounds.

" Harp of the North, farewell! the hills grow dark,
On *purple* peaks a *deeper* shade descending!
In *twilight* copse the glow-worm lights her spark;
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending,
Resume thy *wizard* elm!—the fountain lending,
And the *wild* breeze, thy *wilder* minstrelsy;
Thy numbers *sweet* with nature's vespers blending,
With *distant* echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's *evening* pipe, and hum of *housing* bee—
Hark! as my *lingering* footsteps *slow* retire,
Some spirit of the air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph *bold*, with touch of fire;
'Tis now the brush of fairy's *frolic* wing.
Receding now, the *dying* numbers ring

Fainter and fainter down the *rugged* dell,
And now the *mountain* breezes *scarcely* bring
A *wandering witch*-note of the *distant* spell—
And now, 'tis silent all! Enchantress, fare thee well!"

SCOTT.

In contrast with this, we may view a passage in OSSIAN, in which one epithet, and one only, will be found to occur; and the comparative effect will be obviously striking.

"I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded within the halls, and the voice of the people is now heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its *lonely* head. The moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out at the window. The grass waved round his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina. Silence is in the house of her fathers."

RHYME is appropriate, chiefly, in those compositions which aim at presenting pictures of *beauty*. It is there peculiarly well adapted, inasmuch as its harmony, and regular recurrence, render it pleasing to the ear. In all sublimity there is some portion of irregularity; and, when its description is bound in the shackles of rhyme,

it is generally, if not always, enfeebled. The idea is either too much contracted, or too much expanded, by the phraseology essential to the sameness of the metre. Some essential characteristic is omitted, some graphic touch, which would have given added life to the representation, but which would not dove-tail with the rhyme. Or the thought is again reiterated, *with* the omitted circumstance; and, though thus, at last, we obtain the whole of the statement, it is diluted with a tautology; which, if not altogether drivelling, serves only, as one wave propels another, to deface the power of the previous impression; and, as it were, "smooths the lettered sand," graven upon the mental shore.

TRANSPOSITION *of language* is so far essential to poetry, as it presents a novel and elevated use of words. Novelty ever produces some degree of emotion; and, removing the mode of expression from its vulgar and familiar use, imparts, at least, an *artificial* dignity to the expression, even independent of the sentiment expressed.

There are many writers, ambitious of something fine, who resort, in their prose compositions, to this style of writing. When the sentiment conveyed is puerile, or the subject unimportant, the pomp of transposition is truly ridiculous. Accompanied with great intellectual power, the practice may be allowed; and is, by many, admired. But we may rely, that elegance and beauty must be more natural, must be less apparently laborious and artificial; and that the energy of original thought, and the potency of truth, are impaired by that which demands a higher attention to sound than sense—to pompous diction, and to rounded periods—to the splendor of the artificial symbol, than to the importance of the thing *signified.*

In poetry, it is different. Its object, except when expressly didactic, is not to inform or instruct. Its purpose is *to excite;* to raise pleasing illusions, or awaken pathos and emotion. In poetry, accordingly, it will be found, that MELODY of *sound* is an important element. There are certain *tones* in the human voice, which of them-

selves, independent of all conventional ideas or sentiments that might be supposed to be conveyed by them, arouse deep emotions of the sublime, agreeable sensations of the beautiful, or animated pictures of fancy. These tones constitute the elements of music. But it is obvious, that *spoken* poetry, its pronunciation by the living voice, will be greatly heightened by an attention to this principle. Indeed, in its origin, poetry was united to music—the bard and the minstrel were identified in one—the harp vibrated to tuneful numbers. This stage of society was the era of *the Ode*—the first composition of earliest antiquity—the appropriate language of the lyre.

In every stage of the poetic art, attention to these principles of sound should be cultivated. The bard should give *voice* to his inspirations, and adjust his measure by the excitement or the impression it produces. That cannot be poetry which produces no deep emotion in the heart, and no lively image in the mind. Ridicule has been thrown upon the attempt to make the sound

an echo to the sense. But the principle, here contended for, is not the mere filling of the ear, the mere satisfaction of the mechanical sense: it proceeds much deeper, and involves a much higher principle. Yet, it must be allowed, that the far larger portion of sounds bear with them no impulse to awaken passion or imagination. They are "as the idle wind we regard not;" lighter than the lightest zephyr—they disturb not, by a single ripple, the still and dull lake of indifference—they waft no odour, nor bear on their wing one plume of brightness—still less do they arouse the spirit of the mighty depths of passion, or disturb the slumbers of unconscious thought.

There are various GRADATIONS OF THE POETIC CHARACTER. It might be curious to trace its progress, from the humble plain of prose, to the loftiest ascent of the Parnassian mount; and to select specimens of composition, rising, in due degree, from *the mere form* of poetical writing, through all its stages, up to its most exalted character.

An analysis might thus be presented of the nature and elements of poetical composition, by which its merit would be distinctly perceived, and its principles elucidated. The selection of passages, to illustrate the principle, may, however, be a difficult, and, perhaps, an ungrateful task. For some of them, although affording an appropriate explanation, would be no test of the *general* merit of the writer; and, perhaps, inferior to the ordinary cast of his compositions.

In *the first step*, or, at the foot of the hill, we perceive the mere ARTIFICIAL ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS, without poetry and without rhyme—where there is neither sentiment, passion, nor imagination, in the thought; nor figure, trope, or metaphor, in the language. To "the poet's eye," it is possible, something above mere prosing, may be discerned; but the probability is, that the poverty of the verse has been enriched by the enthusiasm, the fancy, and the association of the gifted reader. Some single word, perhaps, has been unconsciously introduced, which, happily, raises other ideas, connected in the

reader's mind, but unknown to the *writer:* and thus something of poetical impression may be produced.

Here, also, we discern RHYME WITHOUT the existence of POETRY; and of which species there are two kinds. The one, when the writer kindly *intends* to be poetical; but the wings of his Muse unfortunately fail him; or, *melting*, like those of the fabled ICARUS, precipitate him into the waters of rhapsody and confusion. The other class is composed of the DIDACTIC writers, who condescend to put their precepts into harmonious terminations; but probably (though it is not certain) have no intention to do more than smoothly versify their sentences.

Of the latter, we have numerous instances in the writings of Mr. POPE, who was undoubtedly one of the first and most skilful of elegant versifiers; and who, as he informs us himself, could argue with more brevity (and, it may be, with *more cogency*) in rhyme than in prose. Almost any page of the Essay on Man will furnish an example of the truth of this statement.

In the *next stage* of the ascent, we perceive some obvious FIGURE OF LANGUAGE, but no true poetical imagery, nor any power of moral or intellectual association.

This is the ordinary station of the poetlings, THE LITTLE POETS. Their phraseology is sometimes neat and elegant; the lines harmonious, and the cadence perfect. It would not be an agreeable task to adduce specimens of such a species of composition; and its existence is too abundant to need proof. A moderate share of study and practice, with a very small portion of fancy, will enable even those of the most ordinary intellectual power, to reach this stage of versification. It requires no power of combination—no energy of mind—no capacity to abstract or generalise; nor does it demand any elevation of feeling. It holds no communion with human affection, and excites no throb of human passion.

About *the middle region* of Parnassus, we distinguish smooth versification, and the selection of choicely figurative words and expressions, accompanied by elegant or beautiful IMAGERY OF

THOUGHT AND ILLUSTRATION; yet the pathos of moral sentiment still is wanting. This order of poetry is characterized by more of fancy than feeling; and enlivens the imagination, without touching the heart. Yet is it superior to the common range of metrical composition—displaying intellectual skill, if not power; and an elegancy, if not an energy, of mind. It is here, indeed, only, that *true poetry* can be said to commence; though, in the general acceptation, much of an inferior kind is allowed to claim the title. All commonplace imagery is here left behind—the subject is selected with taste—the thoughts, if not grand or profound, are bright and sparkling—and the expressions abound in metaphor and similitude.

Higher up, and *approaching the brow* of the inspired hill, we become delighted with the MORAL BEAUTY, and affected by the MORAL SUBLIMITY, of the productions. The heart is dilated by the exhibition of noble actions, and exalted sentiments. The graceful virtues, and the heroic sacrifices of humanity, are pourtrayed by the

pencil of imagination. The destiny of man—his trials, hopes, and fears—his high estate, and his fallen nature—are pictured in dramatic character, or described in the happy allusions of poetical similitude and illustration. His deeds, perpetuated in deathless fame, become the motives to future action; and bind together, in the fascinating chains of a brilliant association, the moral history of man. Thus, a *name* becomes "a light and land-mark" to after-ages. It forms an element in moral poetry—a talisman of the imagination, by which we conjure up the shades of departed greatness; and stimulate mankind to imitate their actions, and deserve their glory and reward.

On *the summit* of the mount, resides, not only moral grandeur, but the highest INTELLECT, ENTHRONED IN THE HIGHEST IMAGINATION: the sublime of thought, decked in the most exquisite beauty. Here we behold the loftiest range of intellectual conception. It is not merely that the structure of the composition is noble and harmonious—that the epithets, and metaphorical language,

are beautiful and elevated—thrilling the sense with majestic melody, and giving added dignity to the loftiest subject. Nor is it here that we distinguish only the pleasing or the touching expression of moral sentiment. Beyond all these characteristics, there is an extent of thought—a potency of *intellectual invention*, which arouses a sentiment of the sublime in *the understanding*, while it enkindles the profoundest emotions of the heart. We see this evidenced, in the highest degree, in the poetry of MILTON. Numerous passages, from the Paradise Lost, might be selected, to illustrate the principle; but the Address to Light will be sufficient for the purpose. The reference to its origin, as the

"Offspring of Heaven, first-born;"

The conjecture of its being

"Of the Eternal, *co-eternal;*"

The invocation,

"Pure etherial stream,
Whose fountain who can tell! before the Sun,
Before the Heav'ns, thou wert; and at the voice

Of God, as with a mantle, did invest
The rising world of waters, dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite."—

These are noble instances of the profound and grand in human intellect. Whilst, for moral feeling, and for depth of pathos, nothing can surpass the allusions to his own afflicting blindness. He feels "the sov'reign vital lamp;"

"But thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn,
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd."

Then, turning from the sadness of the thought, we are presented with a bright and pleasing picture of his wandering, "nightly, where the Muses haunt:"

"Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but, chief,
Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow;
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling; and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note."

Again he reverts, with a touching and natural melancholy, to his forlorn calamity. After picturing, to his "mind's eye," the beauty of the springs and groves, the hills and brooks, the shady covert, and the tuneful notes, he seems to reflect, that, if these pictured objects are so pleasing to *the eye of fancy*, how much more exquisite are they to *the living senses!* and he exclaims :—

> "Thus with the year
> Seasons return; but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
> But cloud instead, and ever-during dark,
> Surrounds me; from the cheerful ways of man
> Cut off; and, for the book of knowledge fair,
> Presented with a universal blank
> Of Nature's works, to me expung'd and raz'd,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

Then he closes with the sublime consolation afforded by the bright Sun, from whence his own mighty intellect derived its irradiation and energy, and the noble object on which it was employed.

> " So much the rather thou, celestial light,
> Shine inward, and the mind, thro' all her pow'rs,
> Irradiate: there plant eyes, all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight."

In conclusion, we may re-state the general propositions and principles, which have been referred to or illustrated.

The terms in which true poetry may be defined, are of but little importance. Its test is the effect it produces upon the human faculties and feelings. The highest species is that which excites the most exalted emotions, the most elevated ideas. Poetry, which is descriptive only of the inanimate world, cannot long interest human beings, unless associated by the links of mortal sympathy. Even the most sublime aspects of the universe, unless beheld in connexion, or in contrast, with the abodes or sympathies of man, would lose their power of excitement. Yet, for a time, the agitation of the earth and the waters, the perfect stillness and solitude of nature, may, when happily described, be productive of deep emotion. The beauty and sublimity

of Nature is felt and understood by sensibility alone; but the emotions excited by delineations of human art, depend on accidental associations with which they are connected, and the cultivated taste by which they are produced.

Moral poetry, in its unmitigated pathos, inflicts too deeply the pangs and throbs of mortal distress—whilst the purely intellectual becomes too abstract and refined to excite either general emotion, or general pleasure. It has, consequently, been deduced, that the greatest poet is *he*, who combines the beauties, the excellencies, and the grandeur of them all.

The attempt to sketch the gradations of the inhabitants of the Parnassian Mount, has been, perhaps, less successful than even the other parts of the undertaking; and that, indeed, were needless!

The chief elements of poetry are *Nature*, in its sublime repose, and its awful agitations—the *intellectual power*—the *heroic deeds*—the *enthusiastic passions*—the *lofty* and the *touching sentiments* of human beings, and all these sublime

and interesting subjects presented on the poet's page, in the utmost grandeur, harmony, and beauty of animated, elegant, and graphic language.

CHAP. VII.

THE ORATOR.

TASTE FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING — CAUSES — PUBLIC MEETINGS — POLITICAL AND BENEVOLENT — DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE OF ORATORY—ITS GENERAL NATURE—EFFECT OF NATIONAL CONDITION—HISTORICAL PROGRESS—ITS STAGES—THE MOST EMINENT AMIDST THE STRUGGLES FOR LIBERTY — COMPARATIVE VIEWS—GRECIAN—FRENCH—ROMAN—ENGLISH—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ATHENIAN CHARACTER AND THEIR ORATORS — ATTEMPTED EXPLANATION — EXTRAORDINARY EFFECTS OF ELOCUTION—THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING—THE PREACHER—THE PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER —THE FORENSIC SPEAKER — THE POPULAR ORATOR — THE PRINCIPLE OF SYMPATHY — EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING — ITS NATURE—DIFFERENCE FROM CONVERSATION—CAPACITY OF ATTAINING THE ART—DIFFICULTIES.

THE ORATOR.

" There is a prone and speechless dialect,
Such as moves man;————
————Beside, he hath prosperous art,
When he will play with reason and discourse;
And well he can persuade."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE pen and the tongue are now the instruments chiefly employed in the affairs of mankind. " The knight, clad in steel," is no more. We no longer appeal to the sword and the lance, to right our wrongs, or redress our grievances. For brute force, is substituted the subtle influence of opinion. Our social advancement depends on intellectual and moral agency. We are now pre-eminently ruled by the exertions, and the energies, of mind. Knowledge is, more than ever, identified with power.

It cannot have passed unnoticed, that, amongst the characteristics of the present age, there is a

very prevalent ambition to attain, or exhibit, some portion of skill in the art of PUBLIC SPEAKING. The CAUSE of this is to be found in the circumstances which have brought public speaking into higher estimation. Scarcely a day elapses without the convention of PUBLIC MEETINGS, on subjects of general interest. They relate, not only to *politics*, and the important affairs of the community; but the welfare of mankind at large, the cause of charity, of *benevolence*, and religion, in all parts of the world, are also discussed, and sought to be promoted. These objects are to be effected, in a principal degree, by the powers of persuasion and argument; and hence, very naturally, has arisen the extensive desire to cultivate the art of public speaking.

Perhaps one of the noblest exhibitions of the intellect of cultivated man, is presented in the character of AN ORATOR, engaged in addressing a numerous assembly of his fellow beings—convened together upon some great and momentous occasion, when the rights and interests of mankind are deeply involved; and who, by the extent

and solidity of his knowledge, by the sagacity of his views, the energies of his mind, the brightness of his genius, and the pathos of his sentiments, succeeds in convincing, delighting, and persuading his auditory, and triumphantly effecting the object of his exertions.

Indeed, whether we estimate the importance of science, or admire the beauties of art, the exhibitions of oratory must ever present a subject of attractive and important attention. It may, undoubtedly, be urged, that it is a higher employment of the mind to *discover* truth, than to *communicate* it. It may be more important to think profoundly and wisely, than to speak well. The ingenuity which invents whatever is useful in art, or the sagacity which develops a latent principle in science, may, perhaps, be entitled to a higher rank, in the estimation of mankind, than the sublimest effusions of the most matchless orator. It may be proper to prefer the useful to the ornamental—the solid, to the brilliant. It may be, that the thunder of DEMOSTHENES should cease to roll; and the

splendid irradiation of TULLY should hide its light, in the majestic presence of NEWTON, of BACON, and LOCKE.

It was said by CICERO, that *the perfect orator* is he, who can speak on *a low subject acutely*, on *a lofty subject with sublimity*, and, on *a moderate subject, temperately*.

But the attention ought not to be confined to *the subject* on which the orator is employed, without regard to *the occasion* on which it arises, to the peculiarity of circumstances, and to the character, the feelings, and the intelligence of the auditory.

It would be palpably improper, on all occasions, and to all persons, to "speak on a low subject acutely." Sometimes a subject should be treated with gravity, and sometimes with ridicule. There might be seasons, also, when "a lofty subject" would require to be subdued to the ordinary feelings of the moment. As, on the other hand, it might be necessary to raise and elevate "a moderate subject" into dignity and importance. Acuteness, sublimity, and tem-

perateness, are not, therefore, the *only* qualities of oratory. The mode of ascertaining those qualities, is to consider the nature of the feelings and faculties to which they appeal. *Oratory is not an abstraction.* The least of all subjects, can oratory be considered in an unconnected point of view. It must be contemplated in relation to the recipient mind, and susceptible feelings, on which its qualities are to operate. It must always be examined with regard to the occasion on which it is exhibited, and the persons to whom it is addressed. Like the garb in which we appear, it should vary according to the character that belongs to us, and the circumstances in which we meet. Eloquence is the drapery in which Truth is clothed, and by which Reason is adorned. But it must exhibit a diversity, numerous as the subjects to which it is applied, and various as the persons before whom it is displayed. Thus the imperial purple of royalty, the sable dignity of the pulpit, the ermine of the judge, and the crimson of the warrior, are, or appear to be, suited to the character and office of

each. We may travel higher in the comparison, and refer to the varieties of Nature—to the simplicity and gaiety of spring—the ardor, the glow, and richness of summer—the mild luxuriance of autumn—the severity and rigid sternness of winter.

The STATE OF NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT will, in a great degree, account for the state of the oratorical art; yet, there are many causes and circumstances which accelerate, or retard, its advancement. These causes and circumstances, infinite almost in their variety, will produce proportionate effects; and their aggregate result will be conspicuous, although it may be difficult to trace them in the detail. That result will be exhibited in the minds and modes both of the speaker and the hearer—in the topics and the language of orators, and in the dispositions and habits of the auditory. The climate and soil of a country give rise to a train of associations and feelings. A continental or insular position will diversify the imagery and the language. The pacific or warlike character, the commercial or

agricultural pursuits, of the nation, will diversify sentiment, taste, and habit. The nature of the government, its national institutions, and systems of education, will increase the dissimilarity both in thought and expression; and the result may be, that the sort of oratory for which each nation is peculiar, would be found to present *an index to the national character*, and to be the natural effect of the institutions, the habits, the education, the employments, and the general manners of the people.

In the EARLY STAGES OF SOCIETY, oratory, so far as it existed, appears to have been of a bold, rude, impassioned, and figurative character —just of that kind, which would be admirably suited to the taste both of the speaker and the hearers. A certain stage of civilization is attended with many circumstances decidedly unfavorable to the development of great and powerful feeling. In a highly artificial state of society, there prevails a host of dull and formal ceremonies, which always check, and frequently overpower, every natural emotion of the soul.

It may be essential for the comfort and good order of society, that a thousand rules of decorum should restrain the sallies of genius, and the energies of unshackled freedom. But, let us not complain, or wonder, that order should subdue the wildness and grandeur of irregularity; or, that the elaborate ceremonies of life should repress the ardors of fancy, or the lofty darings of intellectual enterprize. When, in the progress of refinement, we behold the natural results of these causes, and the consequent absence, in general, of those energies which belong to a different stage of society, we must not be surprised to find, that genius is very rarely displayed.

In the unfettered state of the human mind, we perceive the strongest indications of an original and fearless oratory. Then it was, that the cant of criticism had not checked, nor its coldness frozen, the genial current of a flowing and natural eloquence. As CIVILIZATION PROCEEDED in its march, the exuberancies of nature were restrained; but her fire, her ardor, and her glow-

ing fancy, were, at the same time, diminished. The orator became more correct, but less animated. Instead of impassioned appeals to imagination and feeling, he attempted to reason; and commenced a communion with the understanding, as well as the heart.

It is no fanciful idea, but one well attested by history, that, as soon as men became learned, and acquired skill in the abstruse sciences, they attached themselves, almost exclusively, to their new attainments; and, from the extreme of passion, sentiment, and fancy, they passed to the dryness and subtlety of abstract speculations. The acuteness of the intellect appears to have been chiefly addressed, to the exclusion, in a considerable degree, of the fancy and the feelings. Now, though oratory by no means excludes a communion with the understanding, its soul and spirit depends on the exercise of the imagination and the passions. Where these are disregarded, there can be no pretension to rhetoric. On the other hand, in a cultivated state of society, the oration which is directed to

charm the fancy, and arouse the passions, without convincing the understanding, is deficient in excellence, and pernicious in effect. In the rude and early ages, the imperfection was excusable. Their language was poetry, and their oratory was passion. Their understandings were uncultivated; and they did not aim to address a faculty that, in its then uneducated state, had scarcely the power of judging. Passing on, we arrive at a period when the human mind is, COMPARATIVELY, COMPLETE. We may then anticipate an address to the pure seat of intellect, without neglecting the passions; and an appeal to the latter, without disputing the superiority of the former. Then it is we may expect the utmost excellence in the art of oratory; a combination of all that is cogent in reasoning, with all that is beautiful in fancy, and all that is affecting in sentiment.

It seems generally agreed, that oratory can flourish in no eminent degree, without a certain measure of *political freedom*. Although some of its branches—elegant perhaps in structure, and

glittering in appearance—may flourish beneath the ungenial shade of a deadly despotism—though slavery may be decorated in the pomp and splendor of flowing language—though a servile eloquence may exalt a living tyrant, or pronounce the lying eulogy over his grave—it is in the sunshine of liberty, amidst the warmth and energy of *her* beams, that the higher and the nobler appearances of eloquence can alone be found. Yet, perhaps, the highest species of oratory does not prevail *after* political freedom has been permanently established; so much as DURING THE STRUGGLES AND CONTENTIONS of its origin, its progress, or its preservation. In a period of tranquillity, when all is calm and prosperous, the qualities which are drawn forth, and flourish in luxuriance, are the beauties and graces of composition. We do not then behold that grandeur and sublimity of expression, which are thrown out by the fire and energy of high wrought feelings, and the ardor of passionate emotions. Hence it was, that DEMOSTHENES would have possessed no adequate object to

arouse his energies, if, instead of the ambition and the aggressions of PHILIP, there had prevailed a state of profound peace. And in vain might we have looked for the fire and splendor of TULLY, in the absence of VERRES, of CATALINE, and MARK ANTHONY.

It has been supposed, that modern FRANCE might be compared with ancient ATHENS. The Athenians were a valiant people, and quick of apprehension. They loved liberty, but were inconstant, vain, and fond of novelty. In the most prominent, if not in all, of these qualities, it may be admitted, the French peculiarly partake. But, in their oratory, there exists but few points of comparison. The causes of their dissimilarity, we gather from their history. The AREOPAGUS forbade all appeal to the passions of the judges who presided over their tribunals. Their orations were consequently close, correct, and argumentative. At Athens the inducements to cultivate the art, were eminently powerful. The laws were favorable to its promotion; and, in every respect, the institutions of the

Republic tended to encourage and advance the art of public speaking. It was, in fact, *the ladder of ambition*, by which the candidate ascended to the regions of public power and renown.

The processes of cultivation, through which the orators of France have passed, must be strikingly different; and, from the diversity of cause, we must expect a dissimilarity of effect. Down to the period of the French Revolution, their form of government, and their general institutions, were ill adapted and ill calculated to advance any thing which required freedom of exercise.

A resemblance has also been attempted to be traced between the oratory of ENGLAND and that of ROME, But here, also, the points of similitude are equally deficient. Our thoughts, feelings, habits, and associations, are widely different from those of classic antiquity. Our situation, in many material respects, is completely at variance. Conquest was the object of all the efforts of Rome. Valor was their chief virtue. Their mythology and superstitions were con-

nected with their principles of action. We consequently perceive, in the specimens we possess of Roman oratory, all those allusions and ideas, which their peculiar habits and circumstances would naturally suggest or produce. It was common with them, in their rhetorical flourishes, to personify all the dumb and inanimate objects of nature, and to address passionate appeals to the deities of their ample Olympus.

The principles of government, the objects of policy, the modes of faith, the habits of thinking, which now prevail, differ so essentially from the order of things during the existence of the Roman Republic, that the resemblance, if any, can only relate to some general principles, upon which mankind, in all ages and countries, are necessarily induced to agree.

We have heard it observed, that there was *a very striking contrast* between THE CHARACTER OF THE ATHENIAN PEOPLE, AND THE ORATIONS of their public men. The former was quick, lively, inconstant: the latter, grave, argumentative, and addressed to the understanding alone, with

scarcely an exhibition of fancy, or an appeal to passion. An attempt has been made to account for this circumstance, by the theory, that, in order to *excite* a people, we must present something totally opposite to their general habits.

The accuracy of this hypothesis is very questionable. Undoubtedly, to excite to any powerful extent, we must not offer what has become familiarized by daily exhibition. It is natural for mankind to love novelty—to desire variety—they acquire these feelings and principles from the boundless multiformity and endless extent of the universe. But contrast, as an excitement, is only a subordinate and modified form of novelty. It excites, only, whilst new and strange. It may become, of course, as familiar as the objects contrasted. Is it credible, that a people should continue to admire what is in direct opposition to their habitudes and natural feelings—that the frivolous and the gay should delight in solemnity and sadness—that the more they are upborne by the buoyancy of joy, the more they should be swayed and moved by its

opposite—that, in proportion as they are light and fantastic, they should be affected by elaborate and subtle arguments, and by the amplifications of severe and rigid accuracy? The supposition is highly improbable. For a time, indeed, giddiness may be drawn into attention, by the impositions of gravity; but, when this ponderous genius becomes, by repetition, disrobed of the vesture of novelty, the inconstant votary wings its way to more congenial temples. Or, should it remain, it must become, in some degree, at least, embodied with the specific qualities of the denser atmosphere.

The cause of the peculiarity cannot admit of this explanation. Perhaps, too, we ought to subduct a little from the extent of the assumed contrast. Undoubtedly, there is a marked *difference* between the Athenian people, as historically depicted, and the portrait we should draw from the Athenian orations. It may be true, that we could not, by the perusal of those orations, have anticipated the existence of *volatility*. But then, it must not be forgotten, that

these productions were prepared and polished with the highest care. We do not expect to trace the peculiar characteristics of a nation, in the toilsome compositions of the solitary and midnight hour. Besides, we must never expect to reduce every thing to general rules, and simple principles. "There is more in heaven and earth, than is dreamt of in our philosophy." There will ever remain anomalies, which no human ingenuity can explain, and which are not to be comprised in the sweeping conclusions of the most skilful, or the most comprehensive, speculatist.

To those who are familiar with the orations of the ancients, it has, perhaps, been a matter of frequent speculation, to account for those extraordinary and WONDERFUL EFFECTS, attributed to the display OF THEIR ELOQUENCE. Those effects are certainly not to be explained by the mere *mechanical* perusal of the orations.

In considering the nature of those magical achievements, which are ascribed to DEMOSTHENES and CICERO, we must never lose sight

of *the elocutionary skill* with which their harangues were pronounced. I apprehend it was *the impassioned vehemence* infused into the manner of delivery, that principally swayed and moved the minds which they addressed. We shall have but a faint and shadowy notion of the orator of that time, if we conceive him exhibiting the tameness of the modern reciter—neither must we imagine him to declaim like a French tragedian. Undoubtedly, he must have possessed all that can possibly be supposed to belong to the utmost and highest excellence and perfection of *the histrionic art*—a perfection of tone—a grace, a dignity, an energy of action and gesture—that, whilst it enchained the attention of the auditory to a pitch of intensity, difficult, if not impossible at present to conceive—held the faculties so excited, so highly wrought, so spell-bound, that, for a season, they were at the despotic control, the sovereign and absolute sway, of the speaker's will. We shall the more readily comprehend its possibility, when, to all our experience and conceptions of the talents of the

first of actors, we add the conviction, that, instead of those powers—powers so subtle and delicate in conception of mind, and so nice, plastic, and flexible, in adaptation of physical structure, and organic expression—that, instead of those powers being employed on *a fictitious*, they were devoted and poured forth on *a* REAL *and truthful subject*. To the pathos that is exhibited by an *imitative* sincerity, was imparted the solemn and divine energy of truth herself! It was her soul-felt ardors that inspired the orator; and her subduing power that moulded, fashioned, and attuned the audience.

There are VARIOUS SPECIES OF ORATORY, each adapted to its peculiar objects and purposes. The understanding, the imagination, and the passions, are each approached through different media. To one, we address those statements and inferences, on which truth depends. To another, we present figurative language, and lively associations; and, to the last, we point out high motives of interest, or frame impassioned appeals to the sympathies of the human heart.

To elucidate this part of the subject, we may refer to some of the characteristics of popular eloquence—to the oratory of the pulpit—and to the elements of forensic and parliamentary speaking.

It may be difficult to say, whether THE PREACHERS of the Christian dispensation, have an easier, or a more arduous, task, to perform, than the moral teachers of antiquity. Probably the truth is, that, in some respects, their path is more smooth; and, in others, more rugged. One of their advantages consists in a direct appeal to divine authority. The ordinary business of the pulpit is to recommend and enforce the belief and practice of those doctrines, the truth of which are unquestioned by the majority of the world. The principles being established, it remains only to ensure their practice. The sacred orator is not always required to enter upon the elaborate task of demonstration. He is not expected to adopt the inductive philosophy, or pursue a logical process of reasoning, addressed to the pure seat of intellect; but yet he

has no common object to effect. He has, occasionally, to address understandings blinded by prejudice—to appeal to hearts rendered callous by worldliness, by apathy, or by vice; and he has to oppose only the simple energy of moral suasion, to the prejudices, the prepossessions, the interests, and the sins, of mankind.

Against these opposing principles, then, is the clerical thunder to be directed, and its milder exhortations addressed. The expositor of the divine law may present the attributes of moral beauty in their most attractive form. He may win attention, by an appeal to the imagination; and he may persuade to action, by the most pathetic address to the feelings of the heart.

The oratory of the pulpit is, in general, characteristic of the peculiar sentiments of different denominations of the religious world. The teacher of each adopts the style best calculated to influence the majority of his congregation. He is acquainted with the minds he addresses. They are embued with devotional feelings and sentiments, corresponding with his own; and

the tide of religious excitement flows with the emotion of the preacher. But were we to conduct the disciple of another creed into the assembly, he would probably remain unmoved amidst the passion of the orator, and the sympathy of the audience. The stream of eloquence, which flowed and gathered in its progress, the tears of the initiated—would pass him unmoved,

> "Like the red moon, on some stormy night,
> Among the fugitive clouds, that, hurrying by,
> Leave only her unshaken in the sky."

The oratory of THE SENATE has also its technicalities, its peculiar allusions, and its associations. In those assemblies, it is chiefly addressed to the understanding. It but seldom courts the approbation either of the imagination or the passions. The Senate is the scene of debate and argument, rather than of rhetoric and eloquence. It is one of the characteristics of parliamentary assemblies, that almost every position is contested step by step. The subjects of investigation admit of an infinite variety of speculation, upon occurrences, generally, in distant prospect, and consequently

liable to all the conjectures which the most diversified ingenuity can suggest. They relate to acts of novel legislation, the proximate or remote consequences of which, become the important objects of the severest scrutiny, and often involve the whole science of political economy, and all the intricacies of domestic government.

A still wider field is opened to the oratorical statesman, in the more intricate investigations of foreign affairs—in the formation of alliances of attack or defence—in wars of expediency, or wars of justice—and in the nice and difficult questions of treaties with commercial nations.

Those master spirits, from whom the best specimens of the art might be anticipated, are necessarily confined in their genius, by the laborious details of the subject. The solidity of knowledge must be preferred to the embellishments of rhetoric; and the comprehension of political sagacity bears the palm alike from the melodies of sound, and the sublimities of passion. They do not aim, like the ancient speakers, at formal and methodic harangues. The habits of

debate resolve the speeches into little more, in general, than a series of objections on the one side, and of refutation on the other. The passions, indeed, are sometimes exhibited; not perhaps for the purpose of swaying and controlling them; but in the bitterness of biting sarcasm, in the invectives of anger, and, occasionally, in the display of the energies of indignant vituperation. In one respect, indeed, the Senate possesses the characteristics of popular eloquence. The speeches are often destined for the public ear, and consequently adapted to it; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that since the time when the speeches made in parliament have been regularly reported to the public, there has occurred a very sensible difference in their nature and excellence.

The style of oratory at THE BAR is characteristic of the subjects on which it is exercised. It partakes of all the dryness which belongs to an intricate science, and all the subtlety which attaches to an abstruse art. The causes of the dearth of forensic oratory, are obvious on the

surface. Unlike the pleaders of antiquity, those who exercise it are bound in the fetters of precedent. Instead of reason, they refer to authority; and the decisions of an ignorant age, become a standard for that which is enlightened! Wisdom and virtue are supposed to be *abstract*, not *relative*, qualities; and what was wise and good yesterday, must, on legislative authority, be so to day and for ever.

Though all admire the display of eloquence, the forensic orator, however brilliant in speech, if ignorant of the subtleties of his profession, would in general remain neglected and unemployed. For, after all that the man of taste may say in favor of the ornamental, even he, when self-interest is importantly concerned, would prefer the useful and efficient. No man would relish the loss of his cause, and consequently of his property, and perhaps his life, for the sake of the most pathetic, the most brilliant, and the most sublime oration, that was ever pronounced by the genius of man.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that

what is not required or encouraged, should cease to exist. The ancient pleaders soon acquired a sufficient knowledge of the few simple principles of their municipal jurisprudence, and the rules of law and practice which existed in their days. The rest of their time was devoted to the study of eloquence, and to all those arts with which it is connected, and by which it might be advanced and adorned. Not so the forensic student of modern times. The professional education of a barrister, is decidedly opposed to the acquisition of oratorical graces. A whole life is insufficient to master the extensive range of our complicate system of jurisprudence: and, since it is more important to know the law, than to descant on it eloquently, the student prefers his duty and interest, to his gratification.

The wide extent of legal controversy denies to the practitioner, in general, the leisure of studying to embellish his speeches. The interest, also, of forensic avocations, is diminished, by their constant recurrence. They become mere matters of common place; and a legal advocate

perhaps thinks no more of tropes and figures, tones and gestures, than a mechanic does of the line of beauty, or the standard and the principles of taste.

The true field for the display of whatever is great in the art of oratory, is A POPULAR ASSEMBLY. Here the amplest scope is permitted. The assembly is composed of elements, which demand all the skill, and are worthy of all the exertions, of the first of orators. There are many who require to be convinced, before they are persuaded; who expect, that, "as attention watches the lips, conviction will close the period." All are pleased with the bright visions of fancy; and the majority are open to the influence of the passions.

The soul of oratory, its essential spirit, that quality on which the highest species of the art depends, is not to be found in the merely beautiful language, nor in the splendor, or the elegance, of the thoughts and images. The most perspicacious wisdom, the most perfect argumentation, does not include it. It is that which

touches the inmost feelings of the heart of man. It is effected by the employment of touching and powerful associations, and by exciting deep and profound feeling. In a word, it is SYMPATHY.

In popular assemblies, above all others, this master principle has the utmost sway. We are unable to remain cold, dull, and without emotion. We are excited to feel, and applaud, and act, by the unconscious and resistless impulse of a simultaneous feeling. It is not in the power of man to stand senseless and unmoved, amidst the agitations of his fellow beings.

The sympathetic principle may be considered also in *another* point of view. Some of the departments of oratory are nearly allied to the poetic art. There are difficulties, however, peculiar to the orator, from which the poet is free. It is no small matter, that the performance of the latter is composed in retirement, and exempt from all the interruptions of external objects. The mind is then supremely its own master. On the other hand, the orator is continually reminded of the necessity of adapting

his speech to the disposition of his hearers, and the feelings by which they are actuated. The poet has an advantage, too, in another respect. His performance is taken up at a period when the reader is favorably disposed to peruse it. The orator must force his way, and excite attention, even against the inclination of his auditors. But, to counterpoise these difficulties, he has the advantage of arousing a more lively, and a deeper sympathy. The connexion between the speaker and the hearer—the ties of a living and present emotion, are more intimate, than between the absent poet and the reader—and it is, perhaps, not too much to say, that, by the operation of this principle alone, we are more interested, and often better pleased, with an ordinary harangue, than a poem of a comparatively superior order.

The nature of EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING, is, generally, well known; but it is not, in some of its peculiar features, always, sufficiently discriminated. No one mistakes a speech for extemporaneous, which has been previously written,

and is either read, or frequently referred to, at the time of delivery. Perhaps, also, very few are at a loss to recognize an harangue which has been antecedently composed, and committed *verbatim* to the memory. The lesson, at least, must have been well learnt; and the orator must be a skilful reciter, if the premeditated sentiments can successfully pass for the effusions of the moment. But there is another species of public speaking, generally received as extemporaneous, that may fairly be questioned in its claims to that distinction. I mean the instances in which the orator speaks upon a subject, long familiar to his mind, every portion of which he has repeatedly considered, and on which he has frequently exercised his powers. The sentiments may not be delivered in the same order, nor couched in the same language; but the leading statements and inferences are the same, though varied in the copiousness, or the brevity, with which some of the details may occasionally be delivered. This is considered as extemporaneous speaking. Instances innumerable of this

kind, we constantly observe in public lectures, and in political harangues. We arrive at the conclusion, therefore, that however elaborately the materials may have previously been wrought, if the language has not been arranged and committed to memory, the speech is extemporaneous. By "*extemporaneous*," is, of course, meant something arising out of the present time—produced on the spur of the occasion—unpremeditated. This is the general notion of the subject. Yet, one may fairly say, it is a very inaccurate notion. The cause of the speech, may, indeed, be an event just happened, or a circumstance then passing. But the ideas which are represented in the speech, and its language, style, and manner, have been previously, perhaps, a thousand times repeated. It may not be precisely in the same order, either of thought or expression; yet substantially so, and sufficiently to familiarize the mind to the subject. It may be, that "the spur" has impelled the animal to recommence its career; but the road it takes, and the pace it adopts, have been often pursued and practised.

It bounds forward in its accustomed path—it hastens to its accustomed goal. There is nothing new in the race. Even *the spur itself*, the proximate mover, gives but the repetition of a former sensation. And, with respect to its *unpremeditated* claims, the supposed absence of forethought, all that is really *thoughtful* in the business, is perhaps, when analyzed, the essence of what has been presented to the mind ten thousand times! The parts of speech may be differently moulded, but the radical idea remains unchanged. The order of the sentences, and the paragraphs, may be varied; but neither in fact, nor in argument, have we any positive invention, nor any novel embellishment, unless in some casual and subordinate part. It may be allowed, indeed, that there is now more extemporaneous speaking, and of a superior kind, than existed perhaps at any former period. We may fairly assume, that the moderns excel the ancients in extemporaneous speaking.

The orations which are handed down from antiquity, were either prepared before they were

delivered; or, they were polished and improved afterwards. They were not recorded by the stenographer at the time they were pronounced, for a very convincing reason—*the art of short-hand was unknown!* We have not the slightest mention of its existence by any writer or historian of that period; and there is no vestige to be found of its practice. One, therefore, of these two conclusions, we must arrive at: if the orations of DEMOSTHENES and CICERO were not, *prior* to their delivery, written and learnt *memoriter*, they are not the genuine productions which were presented to the Grecian and Roman auditories. If they were delivered *extemporaneously*, (even in the most modified signification of that term,) it is not credible they could afterwards remember every thought, point, sentiment, and expression, which composed the speech. In substance, it might be correct; but, in the minutiæ, it could not. The rational conclusion is, they were in part prepared, and in part extemporaneous; whilst we are indebted for the

perfection of these models, to after-polish, and reiterated improvement.

It is, doubtless, more difficult to excel in spontaneous oratory, than in premeditated speaking. Instead of the studied and elaborate compositions of the closet, we have the *first* impress of the living mind, warmed and excited in our own presence. It is for this, the moderns are distinguished. It is thus, in their less perfect, but more natural, illumination, we perceive a superiority over the "midnight lamp" of dim and distant antiquity.

Amongst the infinite variety of modes and species of public speaking, we find some which rise very little above the level of ORDINARY DIALOGUE; while others resemble the more elaborate conversations of the professedly literary character. It may not be very easy to discriminate where conversation ends, and that which is dignified by the name of "*speaking*" begins. A sort of rude standard may be formed, by the length of the speech, and the number of the audience. Yet

these, by no means, form a decisive criterion. A man may make a speech to a single friend, and he may converse with a thousand. A speech is generally made on the legs; but it may be made whilst sitting down. A conversation may be held in either of these positions, or in any other that may be imagined! To distinguish between a speech and a conversation, it may be observed, that the speech should be delivered more formally and elaborately than the remarks made in a conversation. The person who rises to make an harangue, is expected to do so. The hearer composes himself, in anticipation of such a display. He would be surprized, and, in some degree, perhaps, disappointed, if the speech partook of the abruptness and the irregularity of casual conversation. There is a phraseology, a species of *idiom*, that belongs to public speaking; without which, it is different to what we expect; but, with which, conversation would be considered tedious and ridiculous. On subjects upon which public speaking is exhibited, the audience are collected, as it were, with an air of

deliberation and importance; each person possesses the dignity of a judge; and the arguments addressed to such a distinguished assemblage, must, of course, be elaborate and solemn! In conversation, of a free and familiar kind, no such feeling prevails; and in this consists the distinction; and, from this state of things, much of the secret of public speaking may be explained. *Better* or *brighter* thoughts are not uttered in extemporaneous speaking, than in extemporaneous conversation; but they are said in a different manner—in different order.—They are set forth more fully, and more in detail.—They are proved, and illustrated, with more shew of argument, and more pomp of embellishment. These are the only differences.

If this be true, it will follow, generally speaking, that those who can sustain a respectable, or a brilliant part, in conversation, can *equally* SUCCEED IN PUBLIC DISCUSSION. To some, indeed, the effort of a public display, assumes an aspect of insurmountable difficulty. They under-rate their own powers, and over-rate those of others.

It is true, that, to rise in the midst of a numerous assembly, and endeavor to arrest undivided attention, requires, *at first*, more effort, than to speak in a general conversation. Undoubtedly, there is not so much expectation raised in the latter, as in the former case; and it may be, that we have a greater latitude in *talking nonsense* on the one occasion, than on the other. In short, it amounts to this; that the mere babbler, whether necessarily or negligently so, is not very likely to succeed in an art, which certainly requires great industry and perseverance. But those who can inform, or edify, or amuse, in conversation; and who possess an easy command over their powers; will, to a certain extent, undoubtedly succeed in extemporaneous speaking.

The art of oratory demands endowments of the very highest order. It is susceptible of the most beautiful and the most elevated embellishments; and capable of producing as powerful effects on the moral sensibilities of mankind, as the poetry of HOMER, or the music

of ORPHEUS. When we view an illustrious character in all the splendor of its combined perfection, the mind is naturally led to compare its grandeur with the littleness of ordinary attainments; and to infer, that the towering qualities by which we are astonished, are the result of some inherent and original superiority. There are some who, narrowing their opinion, to accommodate the views of others, are disposed to allow of some bright, splendid, and exalted exceptions. Yet, when strongly excited,—when under the influence of powerful emotion,—men, apparently of the most apathetic spirit, have risen to the most eminent pitch of mental energy. Most men possess some darling passion, some favorite pursuit, in connexion with which, their feelings and faculties are excited to their utmost exertion. Touch but these springs of action, these master-chords, by which the human lyre is moved and agitated, and we produce all those effects, which are "the outward and visible signs" of energy and genius.

The highest species of oratory depends, how-

ever, in a great degree, on quick and active sensibility and feeling. An excess of meditation must be unfavorable to it. Hence we may suppose the English character, in many instances, not adapted to the highest cultivation of the art. One of the prominent features of that character being *thoughtfulness*,

"Intent on high designs, *a thoughtful band*;"

they may undoubtedly become good speakers, when they choose effectually to throw aside their taciturnity. But the qualities which they generally display, are study and reflection. They seldom exhibit any bursts of impassioned eloquence.

It will be found, that public speaking is rendered *more* DIFFICULT OF ATTAINMENT, by inattention to the specific character of the mental powers. They who seek proficiency in this art, generally commence at a time when the faculties have become considerably matured, and have been trained and exercised in a particular direction. It is, consequently, reasonable to expect, that,

whatever the mental character may be, it will display itself in the style and manner of speaking. He, to whom poetry has long been a favorite study, will naturally embellish his speech with the decorations of a kindred imagery. Whilst the student of philosophy, and of severe and abstruse science, will exhibit a less ornate and glowing, but a more accurate and profound, view of his subject. It may be admitted, that it is not every one who can become a brilliant orator; because brilliancy is the result of a powerful imagination, and of exquisite sensibility. These are qualities not bestowed upon all. Yet, there would undoubtedly be greater success obtained, if each person pursued that course, which his natural inclination, or his intellectual habits, enabled him to adopt with facility and satisfaction. Eminence is to be obtained in a variety of paths. The important point is, to select that which is best suited to our capacity, genius, and disposition.

In referring to the powers of the mind, essential in the cultivation of public speaking, it may

be observed, that the faculty termed the imagination, especially in its more elevated, its *creative* state, is necessary only to those who display *the poetry of eloquence.* A quick and sound judgment, a retentive and ready memory, are, of course, essential to all.

Independent of the general powers of the mind, which are called into exercise in public speaking, there are certain *habits* necessary to the easy, as well as skilful, practice of the art. They are, perhaps, more of a mechanical, than an intellectual, nature. They consist in accustoming the mind, on all occasions, to arrange its thoughts with regularity and order—to aim at expressing them, even upon the most ordinary subjects, with clearness and force; and to avoid a hasty and careless method of speaking, even upon unimportant occasions. There is another useful habit. Every active mind, when not employed in receiving or communicating ideas, is engaged in some thought or speculation. Instead of permitting those thoughts to wander

at their own pleasure, or at the impulse of fugitive and fantastic associations, let them be reduced to order and subjection. A subject may be investigated, and a series of arguments fashioned and arranged, as well in accidental solitude, as when we purposely summon our thoughts to a laborious preparation. Besides these habits, it is of course essential to acquire the most perfect self-possession and confidence—a mental courage and equanimity, which, by some, can only be attained by careful habit, and long experience. Too much ought not to be attempted at first. If we commence with an effort beyond our powers, and consequently fail, we are disheartened in our future progress. It is the case in every undertaking. If we attempt to wield weapons beyond our strength, we become feeble by the disproportionate exertion, and unable to use even the powers we really possess.

It must be allowed, that he who is qualified to reach the goal of human excellence, must, in

some degree, be indebted to nature. It may be, that there are (to use the phrase of Mr. BURKE) "persons more happily born" than others, and who possess dispositions more congenial to the cultivation or acquisition of great and noble qualities, than less fortunate individuals. They have fewer obstacles to surmount, fewer difficulties to encounter; and, consequently, may arrive at a more speedy, if not a more elevated, result. They will succeed better than their less favored competitors, amidst untoward circumstances; and will not be subjected to so severe a process of discipline.

Some may not complete the fabric with that polish and ornament, of which it is susceptible. It may suit the genius, or the disposition, of some, to exhibit the aspiring column, "cloud capt," in its eminence. To others it may belong to construct a more extensive and abiding, though a less lofty, edifice. Each may be excellent in his particular walk. It may not be given to all to climb the mountain's brow, to

soar in the air, or to fathom the deep; but the hills and vallies are accessible to all; and the even plain may surely be trodden, even by the feeblest strength, and the most temperate ardor.

CHAP. VIII.

LITERARY CHARACTERS.

CLAIMS TO THE TITLE OF A *LITERARY AGE* — CLASSES OF *AUTHORS*—MOTIVES—OBJECTS—POSTHUMOUS FAME—VANITY —PROFIT—PROFESSIONAL HACKS—BOOK-MAKING—CONTRIBUTORS TO REVIEWS—PUBLISHERS—*THE LITERARY AMATEUR* —THE STUDENT—THE BOOK-WORM—THE COLLECTOR—*THE ORDINARY READER*—NEWSPAPERS—MAGAZINES—REVIEWS—SELECTIONS—LECTURES—*INFLUENCE* OF EXCESSIVE DIFFUSION OF LITERATURE, ON MORALS, MANNERS, AND INTELLECT—*ITS TENDENCY.*

LITERARY CHARACTERS.

"Study is like the Heaven's glorious sun,
That will not be deep search'd with saucy looks;
Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books."

SHAKSPEARE.

It is a generally received opinion, that the present is an highly literary age,—that the republic of letters is in a more flourishing state than at any former period. In Europe in general, and in Great Britain in particular, there are, undoubtedly, more books written, and more read, than in any other age since the invention of letters. Literature is a complex subject. When viewed in the aggregate, it may be difficult to determine its general nature or peculiar effects.

Literary characters may be divided into three classes: the *authors*, the *amateurs* of learning, and the *general reader*.

Amongst the AUTHORS, we distinguish those whose motive and object are POSTHUMOUS FAME; from those who are influenced chiefly by vanity; because the former write for posterity, and the world at large; whilst the latter are satisfied with the limited applause of their friends, or, at most, of the age and country in which they live.

It is not necessary to assume, that any one ever wrote from the sole and disinterested motive of benefitting mankind. Yet it is evident, that those who commit their fame to posterity, and are regardless of the applause of the age they live in, and uninfluenced by its rewards, must possess loftier motives, and higher views, than those who seek an *immediate* self-gratification, either to their wants, their avarice, or their vanity.

The desire of posthumous fame, founded on extensive benefits conferred on the human race, is a noble and illustrious motive. It may be said, indeed, that the imagination pictures the applause of posterity, anticipates the zealous

tribute of the future historian, and pleases itself with the contemplation of a distant, and yet unborn, renown. Be it so. We must take human nature as it is. The preference we give to the candidate for *future* glory, is a relative, not an abstract, preference.

In the estimate, then, of the literary merits of the age, how *few* are there influenced, alone, by these high considerations? We shall not, of course, rest the claims of literature on those who write from the VANITY of authorship, whose names are only known to their friends, or appear in the long catalogues of publishers, who certainly cannot be charged with *interested* motives, at least of a *pecuniary nature;* who pay the printer, and distribute, gratis, what no one will purchase. Neither must we depend, for the support of our literary character, on those who write for "daily bread"—the poor bookseller's *hacks!*—those who toil at epitomes, or cull the essence of talent and originality, into the cheap and convenient *compilation*, to encourage the indolence, and foster the vanity, of an affected generation.

From these, then, we turn to the higher class of authors. The majority even of those who possess the most talent, and stand highest in the public estimation, practise literature as an art or trade. It is their profession or calling—it is a system of BOOK-MAKING. The main design is not to disclose new views of human ingenuity—to improve or illuminate the world by new discoveries; or incite them to excellence, by new inducements. It is not attempted to compress the work into a compass that may invite and impress itself on the mind, by a sententious brevity, and may be diffused by its cheapness; but to expand it, by every possible device, to as great a bulk as the public will endure, or, in plain terms, will purchase.

There is a peculiar feature belonging to the authors of the present age, which must not be passed without observation. Those who are writers by profession, are generally also CONTRIBUTORS TO REVIEWS, or, in some way, connected with them. Judging of "*the tree by its fruit*," these worthy gentlemen evidently play very con-

veniently into the hands of each other; and the public take it for impartial criticism! An author never, perhaps, reviews his own work; yet, it is not improbable, that he furnishes an outline of it, and selects the passages which he thinks the most favorable for quotation,—those which are the least dull, and the most likely to induce a reader to purchase the work, in expectation that the cargo will equal the sample.

In short, the claim of the present age, to rank itself as highly and eminently literary, is a mere unfounded pretension. It is, in fact, *an age of books*—it is a cultivated field, yielding a sort of bibliopolic harvest, reaped by comparatively a few authors and booksellers,—a class of very active and clever men, who know how to stimulate the public appetite, and to take advantage of what they have themselves chiefly excited. The modern invention of periodical criticism, is an admirable engine in the production of this effect. It is a politic measure for the leading publishers, to possess a journal devoted to their interests, and the recommendation of

their works. The authors, also, very naturally resort to those who possess the power of trumpeting their fame, and promoting their objects.

The LITERARY AMATEURS, of the enthusiastic kind, are few in number. *The book-worm* is now reduced to a very small class. The reader of real unvitiated taste, is almost as rare as the writer of extraordinary and original genius. Though to compose a work, and to read it, are very different things, and require very different degrees of talent; yet, an author can only be thoroughly understood by those who possess something of a kindred mind. We must not take it for granted, that every man who can read, can also *thoroughly* understand. Nor shall we suppose, that every person who is in possession of an *extensive library*, or who frequently resorts to one, is necessarily bound to read the tenth part of the books he talks of; though their names be familiar in his mouth, as "household gods." Many a fine collection of books, serves the purposes of ornament, rather than of use. Neither should we mistake the distinction, which ought to be

drawn, between the mechanical reader, and the *real student;* between the devourer and the digester of mental aliment. Some there are, beyond all doubt, who possess a true taste for literature; who fully appreciate the works of the great masters; and, whilst they improve their own minds, delight and inform the minds of others, by their communications. But they are too few in number, to entitle the period in which we live to exult over the ages that have gone by. Even could we admit, that the class now under review, was larger than a century ago, the merit of that pretension would be neutralized by the recollection, that the number of the educated has, within the same period, increased in a more than equal degree. The comparative number is, therefore, less; and the interests of genuine literature not the least advanced.

The GENERALITY OF READERS cannot add much to any claim that may be made in favor of literary eminence. The industry and perseverance of those who read at all, is bounded by the *newspaper* and the *magazine*, with an occasional

review and a novel, and sometimes a peep into the regions of poetry. They skim those profound compilations, which bear the name of "Selections," and "Beauties;" and, from these sources, they are enabled to talk, pretty fluently, on the literature of the age. Now and then, we meet with a person of this class, who has turned over a few pages of history, or has gleaned the popular incidents in general conversation. Still more rarely, we encounter an occasional dabbler in philosophy. It is generally very problematic, whether even *the most superficial* acquaintance with the wide range of philosophical science, has been attained by the painful trouble of consulting the ponderous works that are extant on the subject. It more generally happens, that this smattering of philosophy, has been collected at some of the *Lectures*, which are delivered in almost every street in the metropolis; and it is unquestionable, that no intellectual attainment, of any extent or value, was ever made by the sloth of such a superficial process. A mind of any strength, or the small-

est originality, can only be attained by continued and energetic exertion.

The INFLUENCE which literature has over the MORALS of the people, must be undoubtedly great. It is the first step towards the performance of duty, to have that duty accurately ascertained. In so far as literature informs, it is unquestionably valuable. In so far as it convinces the world of the wisdom and excellence of moral truth, it is estimable. But the course it has taken, appears rather to have contributed in producing a state of fastidious and excessive refinement. To refinement, properly limited, there can be no objection; but in this, as in every thing else, that which is good, to a certain extent, becomes pernicious when carried beyond it. Education and literature have tended, no doubt, to render men less ferocious; and, whilst they have lessened the magnitude, atrocity, and violence of crime, they have humanized our sanguinary code. It is precisely to this point, that learning and instruction are beneficial. But they have proceeded much beyond this useful and important limit.

They have refined, but they have also *corrupted.* Though offences of the deepest die are less frequent, those of a lighter character are infinitely more numerous. There is a thousand-fold more fraud, perfidy, and dishonesty; and it becomes a moral question, whether the daily and hourly prevalence of petty vice, is not a greater evil than the occasional occurrence of a flagrant crime. A love of every species of luxurious enjoyment, has followed in the train of these high refinements. There is an unceasing struggle, not for the distinctions of useful talent or virtue, but for the display of the trappings of wealth and fashion. Each succeeding class, is pressing upon that which precedes it. The lowest in the scale of national gradation, very naturally sigh for the comforts and conveniences of the middle order. The latter, not content with these advantages, ape the style and extravagance of those whom wealth places in the higher. Undoubtedly, literature, as well as all the liberal arts, must soften the MANNERS. But it has produced a false sensibility. It has introduced the

"*suaviter in modo*," at the expence of the "*fortiter in re*." It has softened and refined the manners, but injured the energy of character.

An indiscriminate attention to general literature, must also have a prejudicial effect on the INTELLECT, considered with reference to its strength and originality. We have undoubtedly gained something in point of accuracy, and accumulated a larger stock of materials for the exercise of the judgment. We owe gratitude to that diffusion of literature, which has more extensively made known the rights and interests of mankind. But the evil it has introduced, is by no means trifling. The works of science and literature, have become so numerous, that it is not in human power to acquire more than a superficial acquaintance, even with a small part of them. Yet they are so commonly spoken of, though so seldom understood, that persons of ingenuity and ambition, are solicitous to acquire a knowledge of them. Many there are who dissipate an enlightened and vigorous intellect, that might

illustrate and advance some *one* department of science, in a fruitless and indiscriminate attention to too many objects. Many there are who sacrifice health, and a portion even of life, in the attainment of supernumerary arts, or the acquisition of useless languages. Though there are more persons than formerly who know a little, there are few who know any thing thoroughly or profoundly. "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

In forming an opinion of the probable TENDENCY and consequences of the present state of literature, it is necessary to recollect a most important principle, which prevails equally in the intellectual and moral, as in the material world. In the exercise of every power, *moderation* is essential. It constitutes a law of nature. Every excessive exercise of our powers and faculties, is punished in a proportionate degree. All history has read this lesson to mankind. The Romans, who condescended to undertake the task of "civilizing the rude unpolished world," forgot this golden maxim;

considered nothing too gigantic for their enterprize; and the flood soon rolled back upon themselves. England has boasted of her naval empire. But already her power is contested. It is not in the nature of things, that the whole earth can be long subjected, either on sea or land, to the sway of a single people. All human feelings must be against it; and the rod of retributive justice will at last be extended to correct the aberration.

To the aphorism of Lord BACON, that "knowledge is power," may be added, that *power is frequently mischievous.* A nation, acquainted with all the arts of civilization, includes, in its acquisitions, the *arts of war*, as well as those of peace; of conquest, as well as of amity; and will triumph over an ignorant and barbarous people. Amongst individuals, he who possesses a knowledge of the world, will outdo those who are deficient in it. But the triumph of the few, is gained at the expence of the many.

If it should be granted, that, in the present

age, this Country, or Europe in general, is elevated, by superiority of knowledge, over other nations, it must follow, that the latter are, in the same degree, depressed. There is no instance of the enjoyment of human power, without correspondent injury. The equilibrium of advantage, or of happiness, is destroyed. It is the constant effort of all nature to preserve that equilibrium; and, when lost, to regain it. It is a necessary consequence, then, that we must, in our turn, *retrograde.* It is impossible, that every person can possess every species of knowledge. It is a part of the system of nature (so far as we have any means of ascertaining it) that, as individuals improve and decay, alike in their corporeal and mental faculties, so do nations. There is a re-action in the scheme and system of the universe, which is ever employed in the correction of all deviations from its general laws, and in the re-production of that harmonious consistency, on which the beauty and order of the whole depend. The same principle

must extend to the consequences of literature, as to every part of the career and conduct of the human race.

There is another view, also, in which the subject presents itself. We know that the best and most valuable gifts of nature, when they become common and familiar, are disregarded, or viewed with indifference. Whatever is free to all, and can generally be obtained without difficulty, is no longer prized. We prefer the pestilence of crowded cities, to the pure and healthful breeze. The splendor, the beauty, and sublimity of nature, possesses attraction only for a few. They are neglected, for the intoxication of the banquet, or the heat and insipidity of the drawing-room. Such will be the fate of literature. The inundation of books, already exceeds all useful purposes. The supply will become too great for the demand; and the result must be, that authors, less liberally remunerated, will cease to labor. Such must ever be the case, when the article produced is out of all proportion superabundant. Neither will the decline be confined

to the decrease of new productions. Those already written will accelerate the decline in value, and the fastidiousness of taste will fly from what is within the reach of the *odious vulgar*. Prosperity is often ruinous. Abundance and repletion are more frequently injurious than fasting and famine; and it often requires the "sweet uses of adversity," to remove the effects of the intoxications of affluence.

The universal diffusion of literature may change and alter the condition of nations; but it may be questioned, whether it can add to the happiness of the human race, or increase the number, or extend the duration, of human pleasures. At the utmost, literature is the business or amusement only of *a small part* of the world; and though it may vary a little the combination of old ideas, it can never add to their number. It cannot make them more agreeable, more intense, or more lasting.

An ingenious writer has contended, that the object of our being, is the *cultivation of our intellectual powers*; but the reason of this can

only be, that their cultivation is productive of more happiness, than other modes of employment. It cannot be founded on any *abstract* quality of the mental powers, but on their capacity to produce and impart agreeable sensation. Literature can only be valuable *as a mean;* and is to be estimated in proportion as it promotes the attainment of *the end.* It may not be unimportant to distinguish literature from SCIENCE. The results of the latter are as different from the former, as are those of the *fine* arts, when compared with the *useful.* Science is necessary to the comfort and happiness of mankind. Not so learning or literature. Science is the *knowledge of principles* —the ascertainment of truth. Learning is the mere skill and elegance of words. It is the acquisition of systems of language—words of "learned length"—rules difficult and arbitrary. It serves for the ornament and decoration of truth, but is no essential part of it. It is the "pride, pomp, and circumstance," of human science. It is the vehicle, only, in which thought

is conveyed, and very often its movement is slow as a coach of state. It is frequently also held in too high estimation. We are not satisfied with the acquisition of *one* tongue. If we claim the title of "*scholar*," we must know, at least, the two languages of classic antiquity; and a man of eminent learning is expected to be master of many others. We are told that numerous passages are incapable of translation into a foreign language—a proposition rather singular, (except as to puns and the mere play on words,) since, if the passage be intended to *convey an idea*, we must possess its prototype, or the power of producing it; but grant that translations are *necessarily* imperfect, if they are so, we shall not be able to improve them; and it is surely but a selfish motive to acquire a language for the solitary gratification of understanding what we cannot communicate or explain! It may, however, be suspected, that what the most skilful linguists cannot translate, the ordinary student is not very likely to understand.

In the sketch here presented, it has been endeavoured to form an estimate of the literary character of the age. Let it be recollected, that the conclusions are of a *general*, not an individual, nature. There are some splendid exceptions, which stand alone, untouched by any of the strictures, and unconnected with any particular class.

In the result we observe, there are authors who write for fame, authors who write from a motive of vanity, authors who publish in the exercise of their profession, and others who write for bread—amateurs, really and enthusiastically attached to the pursuits of literature; some who unite sound understanding with zeal; those who affect the literary character, who collect all fashionable works, and sometimes all those which are scarce and ancient—sometimes for the splendor of the type and ornament, and sometimes for its antiquity—mechanical readers, who estimate the merit of their exploits by quantity, and not by quality; others, who "mark and digest." Amongst the general readers, are those who

confine themselves to the newspapers and magazines; others, to works of fiction and amusement; some, to the reviews; some, to title-pages, tables of contents, detached passages, and selections; others, to the smatterings of history and philosophy. From the laborers in the vineyard, we have passed to the fruit of their exertions, in morals, in manners, and intellect; and, ultimately, to the tendency of the whole.

CHAP. IX

THE PERIODICAL CRITIC.

AN AGE OF CRITICISM—ITS EXCESS PERNICIOUS—INFLUENCE OF REVIEWS ON THE LITERARY WORLD — EACH ARTICLE SUPPOSED TO BE THE COMPOSITION OF MANY LEARNED AND IMPARTIAL MEN—RIVAL REVIEWS—POLITICAL BIAS—WHAT A CRITIC OUGHT TO BE — HIS KNOWLEDGE — APTITUDE — IMPARTIALITY—DILIGENCE—CANDOUR—UTILITY OF PERIODICAL CRITICISM — CAUSES OF SUCCESS — GREAT TALENT — SUITED TO SUPERFICIAL READERS — HABITUAL INTEREST — ADVANTAGES OF REVIEWING, EXAMINED — REPRESS INCOMPETENCY—CHECK ABSURDITY—IMPROVE TALENT—DECLARE EXCELLENCE—OBJECTIONS—PERIODICALITY, ABSURD—PARTIALITY—NO PERMANENT UTILITY—VOLUMINOUS—EXPENSIVE—INJURIOUS—FEWER STUDENTS—INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES LESS EXERCISED — REVIEWERS REVIEWED — GENERAL CRITICISM.

THE PERIODICAL CRITIC.

"Proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority."

"He is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching."

"When I that censure him, do so offend,
Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE intellectual character of the present age is especially distinguished by the love of criticism. The art has become most eminent; but it has been carried to an undue extent. Its EXCESS is *pernicious*, and unfavorable to the development of genius. It is unfavorable, not only in its effect on the mind of the critic himself; but also in its influence on the minds of those to whom the criticism is addressed. There exists more accuracy of composition in the present day, than at former periods; but there is less nature—less

elevation—and less enthusiasm. We have more accurate knowledge, and more extensive information. But we have fewer developments of original and powerful talent, and fewer exhibitions of sublime and lofty sentiment.

In the mental progress of nations, we have, perhaps, little occasion to congratulate ourselves on our eminent possession of critical talent; for, even in its highest degree of cultivation, it has no essential connexion with greatness of mind. It, no doubt, displays mental skill, and acute and penetrating powers. But, it is rather a peculiar aptitude in the discovery of faults, than a discriminating perception of excellence; and those who exclusively excel in these pursuits, are seldom eminent in other branches of literature.

"They are nothing, unless critical."

It may be suspected, that a period of extraordinary critical acumen, is unfavorable to the progress of original composition, and betrays a symptom of literary decline. It presents a resemblance to the garrulity of age. We talk,

instead of acting. We set forth what *should be* done, rather than really accomplish it. We are too refined and fastidious for any thing natural, great, or noble. We refine away the irregularities of genius, until its grandeur becomes beautified into littleness; and, by pruning too much its luxuriances, we injure its growth, and impede its maturity. We would conjoin the noble wildness and grandeur of nature, with the precision and prettiness of art. We require too much; and, by aiming at the shadowy form of perfection, we lose the substantial attainments of human, though limited, excellence.

The INFLUENCE of the periodical REVIEWS upon the general opinions of the LITERARY WORLD, is undoubtedly great. Readers are, in general, unable or disinclined to peruse the immense mass of original works that are now almost daily issuing from the press. If they were not too expensive, they are too numerous. They are not merely of an appalling magnitude, considered in a *collective* point of view, and in

their aggregate amount; but they are extensive in all their subdivisions and separate departments. A student, whose object is confined to one peculiar branch of literature, is unable to compass, within his own personal study, all that has been published upon even that one subject. He is often obliged to depend upon the fairness and accuracy of the reviews, upon the selections that are made, and the remarks with which they are accompanied.

But, if this be the case with the *real student*, what must be the influence of reviews on those who are mere ordinary and general readers; who have the vanity to aim at attaining a knowledge, or rather a superficial acquaintance, with all kinds of subjects; who read only for personal amusement, or to glean materials for the display of literary chit-chat? To such persons, reviews are the oracles of wisdom. If they have memories to retain what they read, they shine as satellites—the opaque mass of their mental system being illuminated with a borrowed lustre,

and emitting a proportionate display of dazzling light, without native fire—a species of *intellectual moonshine.*

It is generally supposed, by those who are in the habit of reading these periodical specimens of critical wisdom, that they are the composition of a NUMEROUS, and at all events a LEARNED, if *not an* IMPARTIAL, body of men. The constant adoption of the plural and imperial "*we,*" may have had some effect in producing this unfounded notion. It seldom enters into the thoughts of the reader, that he is perusing the judgment pronounced by *one* fallible man, upon the production of another—that what the author has composed with extraordinary *study and care,* is condemned with *haste and negligence.* We are very apt to picture to ourselves a conclave of unprejudiced, cautious, and experienced critics, with attainments fully adequate to their task, pondering in judgment upon the work before them, and deciding according to their pure and unbiassed convictions, and the imperious demands of even-handed justice. We conceive them to

deliberate upon the work—to weigh its merits and defects—to be prompt to praise, and unwilling to condemn—to take into consideration the anxieties of the author, on the one hand; and the claims of justice to the public, on the other—and with all the care, and all the impartiality of a judge, to award, as the organ of the literary world, a true and faithful decision.

"Such is the impression with which the reviews are generally read, and especially the light in which, at no distant period, they were regarded. But, as every evil, in time, corrects itself, it would be no matter of surprise, if the blind prejudice in favour of criticism, should fly off into the contrary extreme. There are certainly many persons, already, who *suspect* both the *sagacity*, and the *fairness*, of the present system of reviewing.

"Yet, still, there are many readers who think that as " in the multitude of counsellors there is safety," so it may happen that, in the multitude of critics, there is wisdom, and who are therefore too readily inclined to coincide with the dicta of

the reviewers. These persons never reflect, that the critique is the production of an individual writer, who is perhaps quite incompetent to the task he has undertaken, and by no means entitled to lead the opinions, to bias the decisions, or declare the voice of the reading public. The probability is, that he possesses far less information on the subject, than the author, who, notwithstanding his faults, is, at all events, more likely to have given it exclusive attention, and to have bestowed upon it more particular investigation, than the critic; and who is not only thus better prepared with the materials, but has deliberated longer and more deeply upon the subject."

Besides, it frequently happens, that the RIVAL REVIEWS, who advocate opposite principles of *government* and *theology*, as may naturally be expected, take *different*, and often directly *opposite*, views of the same subject. When the works under review relate to the peculiar points which constitute the tests and principles of party, we cannot be surprised at their dissimilarity.

But the spirit of political criticism does not confine itself to its own immediate sphere: it unfortunately too often extends itself into the walks of general literature. An author whose political opinions happen to be known, let him write on what subject he may, must not be very sanguine in expecting an impartial review from the hand of a political adversary.

Critics are but men, and it would be unreasonable to demand from them an abandonment of all their natural feelings. The only way to avoid the bias alluded to, would be to consign this task of literary jurisprudence to those who are not professedly party politicians.

To estimate the value of this department of literature, it may be useful to consider the qualities and attainments which are necessary to form the character of a good critic.

If we succeed in sketching what that character OUGHT TO BE, we may then compare the periodical critic as he is, with the standard thus established. The result will shew, whether he

be "found wanting;" whether the qualities in which he is deficient, be not more numerous than those he actually possesses.

A reviewer should possess those peculiar powers of mind, which constitute the *fitness and capacity of a judge.* He should have THE FULLEST KNOWLEDGE of his subject. He should be thoroughly acquainted not only with all that the author knows, whose work he undertakes to criticise; but he should be completely informed of whatever the author may happen to be ignorant. His knowledge should extend, not merely to the branches comprised in the work before him, but to all that relates to it. To judge of a part, and the relation it bears to the whole, he ought to know *the whole.* He should be well grounded in *all the principles* which apply to the subject. Supposing the author, from the narrowness of his views, to be wrong; the critic, whose knowledge is not more extensive, though it may be of a different character, will probably also be equally in error, though not in precisely the same way.

Independent of profound and extensive knowledge, he should have an APTITUDE, and *readiness of application.* An author need not write in rapidity or haste; but a reviewer must *necessarily* be expeditious. The periodical critique must appear at the allotted time; and the sooner after the publication of the book it does appear, the better is it received. In these matters, promptitude and novelty are very important.

Whilst, therefore, an author may supply the shortness of his memory, or the slowness of his apprehension, by continued and reiterated exertions; the critic must depend upon the promptitude of his wit and judgment, or the hour of brilliancy and acuteness will arrive too late.

He ought also to possess a *perfect state of* IMPARTIALITY towards the author.

The advantage of general works of criticism over those which are only occasional and periodic, evidently consists in their being founded upon long established productions, with respect to which there is but little danger of partiality. The subjects are universally known. The critic

cannot well commit the error of reasoning upon doubtful principles. He cannot refer to any old and popular works, to support a fallacious theory, without being instantly detected. His system is likely to be correct, because it depends upon certain general and well known data: whilst the critic of the day can only venture his opinions with the very *same uncertainty* that attends the author whom he presumes to condemn.

Nothing is more difficult than the exercise of true and invariable impartiality. The most upright and honorable mind is liable to a variety of influences. It is not only that the friends or connexions of the author may have a *direct* effect upon the judgment of the reviewer; but, without *even any indirect* intervention, the conviction that a favorable view will gratify those he esteems, cannot but in some degree affect the mind of the most conscientious critic. An attachment to a particular party in politics, or sect in religion, will influence the judgment of almost all men. Even a man's own natural feelings and habits, independent of every other tie, will have their

effect. Those feelings will sometimes bribe his judgment, cloud the distinctness of his perceptions, and pervert his decisions.

It is essential, also, to bestow the utmost DILIGENCE, and *the most patient consideration*, upon the specific work intended to be reviewed. The amplest knowledge of the general subject is not enough. The reviewer should attentively read the work throughout, before he commences upon his critical office,—before he forms a single opinion,—either on the whole design, or on any of its part: his mind should be completely open and unbiassed: he should carefully review every impression he has received, and scrutinize the principles on which it is founded. Scarcely any two minds will arrange even the same materials in the same order, or consider every argument of equal importance. He must not, therefore, condemn the work, because it is not executed in his own peculiar manner. He should look at it in the aggregate, as well as in the detail.

Further, there should be a CANDID, careful, clear, and able statement of the *real sentiments*

of the reviewer. He should describe his honest convictions, his doubts, and difficulties. The author and the public should have a faithful transcript of his mind, distinguishing where he hesitates, and where he is decided. We have a right to the benefit of his doubts, as well as his certainties. The oracular style may be very imposing; but even in the olden time, the secret oracles were less positive than a veiled critic of these modern days. *They condescended to be ambiguous.* Let the reviewer, therefore, communicate some of those misgivings, regarding his infallibility, which belong to all but a blockhead.

The reviewers themselves have not set forth the advantages of their periodical contributions. They appear to have taken it for granted, that THEIR UTILITY could not be questioned. The public have greedily bought their lucubrations, and are eager for their continuance. These indications of favor and patronage are sufficient, and they seek no further.

But the extensive circulation of a work, how-

ever gratifying to the authors and publishers, is no decisive test of its merit. Neither is the want of diffusion, a proof of defect. Frivolity may be modish, and sense unfashionable; yet the worthlessness of the one, and the value of the other, continue intrinsically the same.

Some of the CAUSES *of the public* SUCCESS which has attended the progress of reviews, are sufficiently obvious.

Many of them are undoubtedly conducted with very GREAT TALENT. And works of extraordinary talent, though utterly useless, or even pernicious, will always find their way into the reading market. Superior intellect, however unprofitably employed, will always command attention; and, whilst we condemn the perverse misapplication of mental power, we cannot refrain from admiring its exhibitions.

These works, also,—be they reviews or magazines,—and whether of a first or second rate character, are all precisely *suited to* SUPERFICIAL READERS. The articles are just within the compass of ordinary patience. Like the

short papers of the essayists of the last century, they are of convenient dimensions; and furnish to yawning indolence its gratification and excuse.

Besides, notwithstanding all the objections which can be brought against the principle of these reviews, they really do excite *an* HABITUAL *feeling of interest*, even in the higher classes of the literary world. It is somewhat interesting to ascertain what these men of talent think proper to write upon public questions and popular productions. Though their opinions are not listened to, without some suspicion of frequent bias, and occasional incompetency; yet, in the leading journals, they always ensure attention. The interesting subjects generally selected, and the skill with which the articles are written, afford some gratification to literary taste, if they do not accomplish much in the way of edification.

Though the reviewers have not favored us with a formal statement of their own pretensions, the grounds upon which their utility and importance are rested, are not unknown.

They are supposed to *repress incompetent writers*—to *check useless, absurd,* and *pernicious works*—to *improve talent*—and *make known excellence.*

If they REPRESS INCOMPETENCY, it is to be feared they also repress sensitive genius. If they sometimes prevent the publication of error, they restrain also the diffusion of truth. But it is very questionable, whether *the fact,* here assumed, has any existence. A writer, who is about to publish, cannot *very often* be persuaded that he is incompetent to the task he has undertaken, and flatters himself he shall be an exception to the general severity of criticism. A very large proportion of published works, remain wholly unnoticed. It may be, that many of them are worthless. But it is not unreasonable to conjecture, that the principle upon which reviews are composed, is to render them as *interesting* to the public as possible; and the selections are, consequently, made in order to effectuate this object. It must therefore happen, that many works are excluded, not because they are un-

important, or ill executed, but because they do not come within the immediate scope of the current journal; and afterwards their notice would appear too late to serve the purposes of the concern.

Thus the inducements, and the discouragements, to authorship, remain, generally, as they were. And if the mortification of failure, and all the anxiety, labor, and difficulties, of publication, (to say nothing of the expence,) will not deter a writer from the press, we may suspect that the uncertain lash of the critic will also lose its terrors.

As a matter of plain fact, it does *not* appear that the mass of ABSURD, USELESS, and PERNICIOUS WORKS, is *really diminished.* The scourge of criticism has failed to produce this salutary effect. When was there a time, since the first invention of letters, in which these censured productions were more numerous than at present?

Though periodical criticism has not a *direct* tendency to produce worthless books; yet it

seems highly probable, that it has *indirectly* contributed to their production. It has *extended the appetite for new works.* By its influence with the booksellers, it has given currency to many works, which otherwise would have probably fallen dead-born from the press. And, by exciting the taste of the public to relish every literary novelty; and to increase, in a ten-fold proportion, the demand for new publications,—it has stimulated a host of writers to come forward, in the expectation of satisfying the demand by an abundant and adequate supply.

The IMPROVEMENT it has been supposed to impart TO LITERATURE, is very problematic. It does not appear *very* essential to its eminence. There have been times in which literature has flourished without it. It is not a necessary attendant upon literary greatness. Perhaps the state of literature at this period, contrasted with some former eras, would fairly decide the question.

Periodical criticism did not exist amongst THE GREEKS. Yet it so happened, that in *poetry*

were produced the works of HOMER, of ESCHYLUS, and ARISTOPHANES: in *history*, those of THUCYDIDES: in *philosophy*, those of PLATO and SOCRATES: and in *oratory*, those of DEMOSTHENES!

THE ROMANS had no periodical critics; yet VIRGIL and HORACE contrived to write *poetry*. TACITUS and LIVY could aspire to the rank of *philosophic historians*; and CICERO had *some* knowledge of the principles of *oratory*, and was *not unsuccessful* in its practice! At an early period in OUR OWN LITERARY HISTORY, and before the establishment of either monthly or quarterly criticism, SHAKSPEARE and MILTON managed to achieve something for the benefit of literature, and for the glory of the English intellect. DRYDEN and POPE also, with a *few* others, at a later period, yet still before the bright dawn of periodical wisdom, performed some services in the republic of letters!

Have the writers of the present age, with all the assistance of perhaps a THOUSAND CRITICS, surpassed, or equalled, the productions of these

illustrious authors? No! Neither the epic nor the dramatic muse of Greece or Rome, nor the writers of our own old, sterling school, have been rivalled by any thing brought forward since the establishment, and under the auspices, of modern criticism. How, indeed, should it possibly be so? If the genius of the age be not adapted to the cultivation of dramatic or epic composition, though criticism may sagaciously point out the fact, it cannot supply the deficiency.

It is just *possible* that it may tend, for a while, to continue it. And this, at the least, is certain, that many writers—with a sensitiveness that frequently belongs to genius—"hemmed in by saucy doubts and fears;" composing under restraint; perpetually aiming to be correct; *holding the reins of imagination in the cold and rigid hand of criticism;* will not produce what would probably, under other circumstances, have sprung from a spirited and unshackled mental freedom.

Criticism may prevent extravagancies, but occasional extravagance is not inconsistent with

the most successful flights of the highest genius. HOMER himself sometimes *raves*, as well as "*nods*."

And *who* are the sort of authors that are supposed to be improved by these stated and regular administrations of criticism? It is probable that many of that illustrious FIRST CLASS, who appeal by their writings, not to the fashion of a single age, or country, but to the world at large, and to after ages, will disdain the petty errors which HYPERCRITICISM holds forth to notice. The reviewers, indeed, seem conscious of their inutility in this respect, for they are continually complaining of "*admonitions neglected!*"

It is no discovery of the present time, that faults may be discerned in the best compositions; and, if we grant, that this doctrine, eternally reiterated, has produced a greater share of accuracy in the composition, we must not forget that the *originality* is *less*, and that much of the native strength and spirit of the work evaporates in the process of high refinement.

If it were conceded, that reviews have the

effect of making WORKS OF EXCELLENCE BETTER KNOWN, we have to oppose to this opinion the disadvantage of *preventing their being read.* The majority of readers are satisfied with the able epitomes, and judicious selections, which the review presents, and adopt the opinions with which they are accompanied. The time devoted to criticism, is so much lost to art and science. The reader has but a limited portion to bestow, and is too indolent (as all naturally are) to reject the convenient *by-path*, which is thus presented to him, for *the old and substantial road*, which, although it afforded better exercise, unfortunately inflicted more fatigue.

Independent of these practical considerations, what is the advantage, in point of *theory*, that this mass of criticism is supposed to confer?

On perusing a critical remark, we either give it our *assent* wholly or partially, or we *doubt* or *deny* its accuracy. If we assent to it, on what ground is that assent given? Either because the principle, being previously known, we acknowledge its justice; or, because we rely on the

authority of the critic. In the one instance, we depend upon our own information; and, on the other, upon that of the reviewer. What have we gained? We have been reminded of what we well knew before, or we have learnt something—whether right or wrong, true or false, we are ignorant—and our authority is the *ipse dixit* of an anonymous writer.

But suppose that we doubt or dissent, what benefit have we *then* derived? We have met with a new specimen of human fallacy—a further addition to the mass of human error—another example of rash judgment, or of hasty conjecture!

The OBJECTIONS, indeed, to this species of literature, are numerous.

The PERIODICALITY of reviews is *absurd.* Like poet-laureates, who must "rhyme" often "without reason," these writers, at all events, must be critical. A certain quantity of praise and blame, must be furnished at the regular time. If the tribe of authors should have been more idle or more cautious than customary, and

have failed in supplying materials for dissection; no matter! The critic must resuscitate some neglected subject, or raise into importance some insignificant production; or, taking the title of a book, without noticing its contents,—from that title, or some subject to which it may remotely refer, write a dissertation, instead of a review. The allotted number of pages *must* be supplied at the appointed time—the punctuality of trade must be observed—the bookseller's window must be furnished—and the cruelty of disappointment prevented to their anxious and numerous readers. We all know the force of habit, and the uneasiness of "*hope deferred.*"

These works are SELDOM IMPARTIAL. The circumstances which prevent the exercise of impartiality, have been before adverted to. They arise out of the complicated influences, to which all men are subject. It is not necessary to impute corrupt motives. The want of impartiality, is *a fact*, which no candid mind can deny. Partiality seems to belong to the very nature of these works—to be inseparable from them; and,

whilst we regret that it should be so, it is impossible to question its existence.

They are of an ephemeral character. They can never be standard works of reference, or of general and PERMANENT UTILITY. They are too VOLUMINOUS, and too EXPENSIVE.

Within the last twenty years, there have been published about ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY VOLUMES of this sort of composition. They comprise, undoubtedly, a vast body of information, collected and illustrated with great acuteness and talent. They display, aggregately, uncommon industry. But, conceive the herculean labor of gathering from this unconnected and scattered mass, the materials requisite for any urgent or important occasion!! It is enough to trace, from article to article, the references of an Encyclopedia, in order to master the details and branches of a subject; but here we have as many indexes as volumes; we are referred, perhaps, to directly opposing statements and opinions; and often where we expected a full discussion of an interesting point, it has suited the purpose

of the reviewer to pass it with the briefest notice.

Beyond, therefore, the mere entertainment of the hour, and the satisfaction of immediate curiosity, these productions are clearly of no solid or permanent utility.

A striking and pernicious consequence, to the advancement of literature, is, that these summaries and critiques satisfy the reader, and prevent the perusal of the original work. Or, if the work be afterwards consulted, it is viewed through the veil of prejudice, and less carefully considered. It happens, therefore, that although literature is diffused, it obtains only a superficial cultivation; and, as a natural consequence, there are FEWER REAL STUDENTS.

The effect upon the mind is injurious. Where the means of literary display are so easily obtained, THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES ARE NOT ADEQUATELY EXERCISED. They are not strengthened by the hardiness of their attainments, nor incited to their utmost exertion by the stimulating processes of difficulties overcome.

They resemble the corporeal powers, which have been exercised only in the elegancies of a ball-room; which, pampered by luxury, are never strung by the healthful hand of toil and temperance. (e)

Amidst these evils, perhaps, nothing could be more important to the cause of literature, than the establishment of a work, which should, annually, REVIEW THE REVIEWERS; re-judge their decisions; and constitute, as it were, a court of *literary appeal.*

But here the insuperable difficulty would still be the want of *impartiality.* Talent, fortune, liberality, and spirit, might be found to point out the evils of our present literary journals—to supply their neglect and omission—to hold up their injustice to observation, or to correct their severities. But, from the vortex of partiality and influence, few can escape; and a member of the republic of letters, wholly devoid of prejudice and predilection, with respect to some subjects, or towards some party, or individual, could scarcely any where be found.

The conductors of such an undertaking would not always be free from bias, even were they residents, or natives, of *another country*. The intercourse of nations would lead to literary intimacies; and, by consequence, to influence, and occasional partiality.

To works of SYSTEMATIC and GENERAL CRITICISM, there can be no objection. They are founded upon ascertained principles, deduced from those works which have stood the long test of ages,—which have not owed their success to fashion, or to evanescent circumstances; but have interested or delighted mankind in every civilized country.

The general rules of criticism have long been known. It is scarcely possible that it can be reserved for the present race of periodicalists, to make any new discoveries in the arts of praise and censure. If any thing could have escaped the penetration, the taste and learning of ARISTOTLE and LONGINUS, of HORACE and QUINTILLIAN, it was probably supplied by DRYDEN or POPE, by JOHNSON or BLAIR. The field

was *reaped* by the ancient critics. It has been *gleaned* by the moderns of the last age. We may question, whether a single ear remains ungathered, or a single grain unpicked.

We can now look only for speculative conjectures upon the probable durability of our current literature. Whether the opinions of the periodical critic will be sanctioned by another age or not, none can foretel. Perhaps those opinions may be swept away by the "besom of time," along with the subjects upon which they were pronounced.

Those durable works, whose valuable materials and solid composition are their passport to posterity, will owe no debt of gratitude to the pen of the reviewer. Nothing but their own intrinsic vigor can sustain their literary longevity. Criticism can do nothing towards their ultimate success. Were the whole host of reviewers, numerous as they are, to be suddenly annihilated, should we fear that literature would decline—that *the poet* would cease to record the bright visions of his fancy—that *the historian*

would neglect to record the transactions of mankind, or *the philosopher* to generalize and speculate upon them? No! Rather should we conclude, that those talents, now employed, or wasted, in these ephemeral productions—and many of which are of the first order of excellence —would be turned to higher pursuits; and, in more useful and durable compositions, contribute to the improvement and happiness of mankind.

CHAP. X.

THE MAN OF GENIUS.

MEN OF GENIUS DISTINGUISHED FROM MEN OF TALENT AND MEN OF LEARNING—THE DIFFERENT ORDERS OF GENIUS—THE FINE GENIUS—THE SUBLIME GENIUS—CHARACTERISTICS—PROGRESS OF GENIUS—GRADUAL—SUDDEN—CAUSES OF DIVERSITY—EFFECT OF PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION AND TEMPERAMENT—MINDS ORIGINALLY DIFFERENT—ALWAYS DISSIMILAR—BUT GENERALLY *EQUAL*, AND CAPABLE OF EMINENCE.

THE MAN OF GENIUS.

——" With the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power, a double power,
Above their functions and their offices."

——" 'Tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So *genius* peereth in the meanest habit."

——" Once, or twice,
I was about to speak; and tell him plainly,
The self-same sun, that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on all alike."

SHAKSPEARE.

It is probable that *nothing new* can now be advanced on the subject of genius. Yet, presented in the form of an *individual character*, representing a class, as a specimen represents the whole, it may be viewed in a more concentrated and distinct light than that in which it is generally regarded. It is not, however, on this occasion, intended to investigate either its metaphysical nature, or the numerous anecdotes

which have been adduced to establish its original existence, or its educational progress.

That there exists *some* truth on both sides of the question, cannot reasonably be doubted. If the advocates of the opposing systems had adduced no plausible arguments in their support, they must necessarily, ere this, have fallen, never to rise again. We may rationally conclude, that there must be some mode of reconciling such apparently contradictory theories, and some means of establishing the consistency of the facts which belong peculiarly to each.

There are some, indeed, who think that the conflicting opinions on the causes of human talent, arise from an insufficient acquaintance with the process by which that talent is produced, and that a fuller knowledge of the facts, and a more patient investigation of the results, would lead to far different conclusions;—that we ought not to imagine the stream to be deep, because we cannot perceive the ground on which it flows, nor conclude that its sources are undiscoverable, or its progress untraceable, because we are

absent from the spring, or casually lost in the windings of its course.

Men of genius are distinguishable both from men of talent and men of learning. The characteristics which constitute the difference, are fervor, sensibility, and enthusiasm. Talent is mental endowment. Learning is synonymous with acquisition. Genius is a combination of intellect and susceptibility.

THE TALENTED are possessed of those powers which constitute the *understanding;* and on which, *reasoning* depends. They have the capacity to comprehend intricate and extensive subjects, and the faculty of arranging and illustrating, or establishing, all the acute conceptions of their minds. They can discriminate with subtlety the most abstruse relations, and analyze the most complex combinations. They possess a capability of becoming profound philosophers in physical, mathematical, and intellectual science. They may invent new theories of the universe, and frame new classifications of the material world. They may discover new phe-

nomena, and deduce new conclusions. Whatever can be accomplished by persevering scrutiny, or effected by an investigating and penetrating spirit, we may anticipate they will perform. But they will not be pre-eminent in *moral* philosophy. They are deficient in that *tact* and fineness of sympathetic perception, which pierces into the minute veins of the human heart, and into the "still small" springs and movements of human action. The mere man of talent,—the hard-headed thinker,—has not sufficient of "the milk of human kindness" to enter into the feelings, or comprehend the subtle influences, by which the chords of mortal passion are touched and vibrated. His soul is not attuned to the strings of sympathy; and he knows but few, if any, of the notes within the compass of the heart's melody.

THE LEARNED are often endowed with a surprising acuteness in the perception of nice distinctions in artificial signs, and in the subtleties of language. They frequently possess also a memory of extraordinary extent and variety—

a faculty of discriminating and arranging systems of arbitrary characters, and of retaining them in the mind, even unconnected with any utterance of sound. These symbolic representations constitute, literally, the *dead* languages. They exist only on the printed page. They resemble the hieroglyphics of old. They are as "*a sealed book*" to the illiterate; yet, to the eye of the initiated, they present a world of curiosity and interest. This verbal memory, in connexion with some other powers, gives also a capacity to acquire, and use, a great variety of spoken languages.

The man of learning is often possessed of some share both of talent and genius. He may possess a mediocrity of each; but, ambitious to shine in all excellencies, he becomes eminent in none. The mere scholar—the translator of voluminous or rare productions—is the pioneer of literature—the caterer of talent and genius. He may be distinguished for bibliomanic enthusiasm; but it is a fervor by no means characteristic of the noblest class of intellect. The

investigation of nice constructions, and the elucidation of difficult texts, unless connected with important principles, or useful and interesting truths, may be ranked with the avocations of those *virtuosi*, who pass their moral and intellectual existence in the collection and arrangement of shells and butterflies. Not that such employments are altogether worthless; for all general facts, and extensive classifications, have their measure of utility, even while they are *comparatively insignificant*.

GENIUS may be classified into TWO ORDERS. The one resembles the pleasing beauties of a rich and finely-cultivated landscape; the other, the bold and impressive sublimity of a wild alpine prospect. The former may be compared to the symmetry and beauty of an APOLLO; the latter, to the sinewy and giant strength of a HERCULES. The first resembling the Genevan lake, under the stillness of a calm, luxurious, and sunny sky; and the second, the same scene, amidst the loud storm, the peeling thunder, reverberated from the echoing JURA, and the

fiery lake, lit by the vivid blaze of the electric fluid. In a word, it is the contrast of the sublime and the beautiful—the opposition of the graceful and the grand.

The intellectual character of each of these classes, stands broadly contradistinguished from the other class. Though not absolutely and universally incompatible, they are generally inconsistent. Both are, however, remarkable for a fervid temperament, for sensibility and enthusiasm; but their fervor, their sensibility, and enthusiasm, are excited by different objects.

The characteristics of THE FINE GENIUS, are *taste*, *sensibility*, *refinement*, and *grace*. The representative of this class is affected, principally, by those subjects which are suited to the elements of his own constitution and character; to every thing that is arrayed in beauty, that is decorated with elegance, and adorned by fancy.

He may be known by his choice of intellectual pursuit. He is the ADDISON in prose, and the POPE in poetry. The gentle pathos of the moral

tale—the lively fancy of the work of taste and fiction—the picturesque beauty of cultivated scenery—the simple melody of song—the grace and symmetry of form—and the softness and brilliancy of tint—are the suitable subjects of his admiration, or the appropriate employments of his mind. His taste will, probably, not accord with the poetry of TASSO, nor the paintings of FUSELI—with the raciness and the exuberances of the BARD OF AVON, nor the simple strength, the unadorned diction, and lucid style, of JONATHAN SWIFT. The irregularities of the genius, and the occasional coarseness, of the AGE of ELIZABETH, will not harmonize or be consistent with his delicate perceptions of polished grace and refined dignity. His sensibility will be painfully excited, rather than congenially gratified, by the awful suffering and harrowing expression, depicted in the immortal representations of THE LAOCOON, and THE DYING GLADIATOR. His refinement will revolt at the spectacle of woe and terror, unless shrouded in the guise of poetic relief, or softened by the

contrast of pleasing associations, or of mitigating circumstances.

The characteristic features of THE SUBLIME GENIUS, are *great energy, striking originality, noble,* but irregular and high-wrought, *aspirations:*

> " We may ken the manner of his gait;
> He rises on his toe; that spirit of his,
> In aspiration, lifts him from the earth."

He is distinguished by a proud and lofty bearing; by a spirit, sometimes, of imperious command; yet, with an aspect very different from that bold confidence, and rude audacity, which is displayed by some who possess more of talent than feeling, and who have neither the taste of the man of learning, nor the sensibility of the man of genius. A being of this order is excited by whatever is vast, elevated, and profound. He is " smit with the love " of all that is great and illustrious—with the renowned deeds that have been the wonder and the admiration of ages —with the fame that has followed the bards, the philosophers, and the orators of " the olden

time." His soul pants to imitate the heroes of the ILIAD, or the poetic genius that has immortalized their achievements. Circumstances and temperament conjoined, may lead him to the *field*, or devote him to the *closet*; and he wields the pen, or the sword, as his destiny may dictate.

The intellectual career of one of this elevated character, will be indicated, also, by the selection of his subjects. The *tragic* or the *epic* muse, will alone satisfy his ambition. MILTON will be his model. Or, if philosophy attract his footsteps, it will be to imitate, or to rival, the renown of BACON.

He will enjoy a stern delight in the loud raging of the awful tempest—in the fiery conflict of the elements—in thick and utter darkness, contrasted with the wild, vivid glare of the forked lightning—in the crash and bursting peels of thunder—in the mountainous heave of the mighty deep. In a less intense degree, his glance will dwell upon the wide, interminable, and desolate plain—upon the scathed and arid

waste—on the blue and barren mountain—on the deep gorge, and frowning precipice—on the rush and fall of waters, and the waving, majestic, and extended forest.

The periods of the development of genius, and its PROGRESS, are various. Sometimes it appears in the *earliest* dawn of the intellect, and sometimes at a *late* and mature season. Frequently it is *sudden* in its appearance; yet often slow, *gradual*, and progressive. It is, on some occasions, observed rising in the infancy of the human mind, flowing on, with gradual accumulations, to a mighty expanse; and, finally, bearing its gifted possessor to the extreme limit of human greatness. At other times, however, we may mark its sudden appearance in the maturity of life, previously concealed, in the noiseless obscurity of its course, from the eye of observation.

The GRADUAL development of genius may, perhaps, in the outset, have been aroused by example, or by precept. It might, in its early progress, be limited and circumscribed, because

its energies were little excited. Success has *then* been doubtful. The mind of the aspirant fluctuated between hope and despondency—sometimes pursuing the object with ardor, and again flying from it with disgust. Improvement, however, takes place—a conscious satisfaction begins to cheer and lighten the labor of exertion. Objects of emulation are presented. They increase; until ambition, completely aroused, expands and enlarges its demands. Then it is, we begin to discern the decided indications of that energy of intellect, and those lofty feelings, which bear the name and stamp of genius. The pursuit, whatever it may be, becomes the favorite and irresistible impulse of the mind. All other considerations sink into nothing, before the mighty and overwhelming influence of this master passion. Under the sway of such powerful impulses, we need not wonder that men attain the highest eminence and distinction. It is the natural progress of mind, and the just result of exertion.

It is more difficult to account for the SUDDEN

rise of this envied and energetic quality. Yet, in the instances of a rapid development of genius, it will be found, perhaps, that a powerful impulse, adequate to the effect, has fanned the latent spark into a flame. It has operated like *the murderer's dagger* on the SON OF CYRUS: the irresistible impulse overcomes the defects of nature—"*The dumb speaks.*"

Of the early history of genius, when its existence has been only discovered in advanced life, we are generally ignorant. It may have been silently progressive; unknown, because unobserved, even by its possessor: for genius, though often proud, is sometimes humble, and shrinks with diffidence from the public gaze. We cannot always infer the want of intellect, because it is not exhibited. The faculties, though dormant, may not be extinct. They may exist, though they are not thrust upon our attention. *(f)*

The CAUSES OF THE DIVERSITY of human genius, are, in their nature, perhaps, incapable of ascertainment. The development of the intellect seems greatly to depend upon external

circumstances; since, in the absence of external excitement, it must remain, comparatively, dormant. Yet there must be an internal *recipient* power, adapted to co-operate with its appropriate objects. The germ must be within, though the development is from without. Still, though the grain be sown, it cannot shoot up by its own intrinsic energy. It must depend on nutrition—on the soil—on the sunshine, and the shower. The internal power is evinced by *a state of excitability*. It is capable, in all cases, of being increased and diminished, by the operation of habit and circumstances. The causes, perhaps, by which it is influenced, are to be found in the innumerable objects that are productive of pleasure or pain. Those who are the most susceptible to these impressions, and in their greatest variety, possess the elements of a rapid development of the faculties. Thus, we observe that lively, vivacious, and impetuous characters, display an earlier maturity of intellect, than the slow and grave. It often occurs, however, that the growth is too rapid for its

permanency or strength. A gradual development of the human powers, both mental and corporeal, is the most favorable to their greatest *ultimate* expansion and excellence. The weed, rank and luxuriant, "grows, lives, and dies," in hasty succession. The "unwedgeable and gnarled oak," requires a century to mature its grandeur. The painted and gaudy butterfly may be born, and may die, within the compass of a summer's day; but the ardor of the eagle attains a later maturity, as it presents a nobler result.

There appears to be something in THE PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION of some persons, which adapts and enables them to acquire, far more readily than others can ever attain, a peculiar and extraordinary skill in certain arts and accomplishments, and which bestows a capacity to perfect the character of their natural powers and endowments. They appear to have but little, if any, difficulty in effecting their objects. They have a peculiar promptness in devising their plans, and a remarkable facility in executing their purposes. Their conceptions are formed

almost spontaneously, and are elucidated with the most felicitous and skilful ease. Is this fortunate capability to be explained by the state and operation of the animal spirits, and the nervous system?

We are not, perhaps, perfectly agreed on the nature of these "*animal spirits*." We can scarcely define, or describe, what the term is intended to signify, or the precise idea which it is designed to convey. Perhaps it means to represent that state of the organization, which is found in connexion with energy of thought, and vivacity of expression. It supposes that the intellectual elements are similar, or *equal*, in all men; but that the physical constitution is *different*,—that on the machinery of the mind—on the system of instruments, and powers, by which it operates—depend the ease, or the difficulty, the defects, or the excellencies, of its action.

The intangible and veiled spirit of the intellect—whether essentially immaterial and immortal, or composed of substantial ingredients, and

" born to die," like all earthly elements,—still, *on either hypothesis*, acts by corporeal agents, and cannot possibly act without them. The excellency, therefore, of its conceptions, the energy of its volitions, and the power and skill of its performances, must not only be influenced by the natural structure, and the accidental or occasional state, of these corporeal organs; but are inseparably connected with the *degree* of their original perfection, and subjected to all the vicissitudes of their progress, their maturity, and their decay.

In the general TEMPERAMENT of human beings, there appears to be an infinite variety of degrees. In the one extreme, we may distinguish the lowest order of the phlegmatic character—a state marked by an almost total apathy of mind, and insensibility of feeling. In the other, we observe an union of the most fervid appearances of the sanguine and the choleric—an excitability which, under the influence of any unusual impulse, rises into positive phrenzy.

The nervous system appears to be too finely attenuated; and, when touched by the rough hand of some sudden and violent excitement, it seems either to recoil and shrink from the grasp; or to be roused into an energy far beyond its general capacity and usual strength,—displaying, occasionally, an abject and prostrate fear, and sometimes the wildest and most impassioned courage.

If, in the agitations of its darker hour, there exists a deep and acute misery; there is, in its better moments, the highest satisfaction, and the most exalted feelings. If apathy escape from affliction, it never meets with joy. If it feel no wound from the disappointment of "the longings after fame;" neither is it cheered by the animations of hope, nor gratified by the thrillings of a well-earned success.

Genius is characterized by something of this *fire of vitality*. When its energies are the most aroused, it presents an aspect of inspiration, and displays an ardor of feeling, and a blaze of

fancy, that, in the frigid view of the phlegmatic, appears little less than insanity. But here "*there is a method in the madness :*"

> "'Tis *not* the very coinage of the brain."

Though it may be "ecstacy," it is the *healthful music* of an exalted intellect—the bright and glowing imagery of a fine and fertile invention, and the deep pathos of an ardent sensibility.

The problem of mind—its natural endowments, and its capacities of improvement—is, probably, beyond the power of any human being decisively to solve. We seem, at the best, only to form *conjectures* regarding the nature of the intellect, and speculations with respect to the extent of its powers. The notions which are acquired by the most profound thinkers, and the most patient investigators of the subject, even when distinctly formed, and complete and luminous to their own perceptions, are difficult to explain, and still more difficult to establish, to the satisfaction of others. Human language, notwithstanding all its progress and improvement, is still inadequate

to the clear exposition of many intellectual impressions; and, on many occasions, we are able to present only a faint glimpse of the recondite conceptions of the understanding.

Where, therefore, doubt exists on such a subject, it is important to prevent the circulation of an opinion, which might have the effect of rendering exertion hopeless of attaining the reward of success, and of restraining that generous spirit of emulation, which ever

"Prompts to be first, and rise above the rest."

If we cannot decide against the existence of numerous instances, in which pre-eminent genius has been displayed—a genius which many would, in vain, attempt to imitate, or to equal; yet it cannot follow, as a necessary consequence, that the rest of mankind are endowed with *no genius whatever*, and are totally incapable of displaying ANY *species of excellence!* There may be some individuals, remarkable for a predisposition towards particular objects, and a capacity to attain peculiar arts; without any universal or

general superiority over the rest of mankind. In truth, in those who are famed for distinguished attainments, and are devoted to peculiar pursuits, there is often perceivable a striking deficiency in whatever does not harmonize with their favorite and exclusive avocations.

From all the observations that have hitherto been made, it appears, that although the minds of human beings are *at all times* essentially *dissimilar*, and were *originally different;* yet, the aggregate result of intellectual power, is generally of an EQUAL *amount*. Mankind (allowing for some few exceptions) are all capable of attaining a high degree of eminence, either in art or science, and of displaying either invention, reasoning, or eloquence.

That MINDS ARE DIFFERENT in their present and actual state, can scarcely be sincerely questioned, even by the most sceptical. No two individuals—and certainly no large number—can perform the same intellectual acts with the same degree of skill, perfection, and facility, or in the same form and manner. A poem, or a

philosophical treatise, would not, *by different authors*, be composed of the same thoughts, nor expressed in the same language and sentiments. Neither could those powers, which are peculiarly adapted to excel in the investigation of the abstruse sciences, be employed with equal success in the fine arts. There is an undoubted difference in these respects. NEWTON and LOCKE, in reasoning powers, were probably equal; yet their genius was dissimilar. The mathematical and physical calculations and researches of the former, could not have been transferred to the metaphysical contemplations of the latter. The intellectual power was equally great; but its peculiar components, and the sphere of its action, were different.

But, whatever may be the resemblance subsisting between those engaged in researches of *pure science*, where the pursuits and the employment of the faculties are alike, it appears, beyond all doubt, that between the mind of *a poet*, and that of *a mathematician*, there must have been an ORIGINAL and striking DISSIMI-

LARITY. Not that instances may not exist, in which the same intellect may be fitted to attain a respectable, and perhaps a high degree of excellence, in science and the fine arts; but a mind calculated to reach *the most exalted station* in *one*, could never equally succeed in *both* departments. Intellect, of as high an order, is demanded by science, as by art—an intellect even of a more penetrating, a more profound, and a more persevering character; but in poetry, and eloquence, as well as in music and in painting, something superadded to the intellect is requisite. *Sensibility* is essential to enable us to receive the impression of objects with more than the mere unassociated stamp of reality. The plain, simple, and unadorned fact, is unable to excite those conceptions and feelings, which arise up at the touch of genius, which are the indication of its existence, and are ever found to follow in its footsteps. And, unless this exalted view of subjects be *intensely felt*, it cannot be *powerfully expressed.* To sketch those pictures of imagination and passion, which are adapted

to raise the thoughts, and excite the feelings, of human beings, we must ourselves possess a vivid perception of the objects and qualities which are fitted to produce elevated emotions, and a powerful capacity to delineate and convey them.

But these considerations still leave to mankind all those motives to exertion, which urge forward the mind of emulation, to the attainment of superior excellence. Although no one can arrive at eminence in *every* art, it is in the power of all to become master of some *single* object of distinction.

> " *One* science only, will one genius fit,
> So vast is art, so narrow human wit."

The natural faculties of human beings are far superior to the standard at which they are usually rated, and capable of much higher cultivation than is usually allowed. Minds are more equal than is supposed. To use the simple phrase of CORPORAL TRIM, in reference to the soul of the negro, " one person is *not* so sadly placed

over the head of another," as the theory of innate and original superiority would assume.

There are different degrees of excellence in the *physical* world; and, by analogy, we are called on to infer a difference, similarly frequent and extensive, in the *metaphysical.* Diversities, it seems indisputable, will ever prevail in the mental powers of the human species. Varieties may exist—some of them the result of natural disposition, and some of education, of habit, and circumstance. Yet the question of original equality remains the same. To speak in the language of the arithmetician, the *specific items* may be dissimilar, though the general amount, and *final balance*, should be *correspondent.*

Reading without reflection, and study without practice, are not likely to be more efficacious than food, which has neither been masticated nor sufficiently digested. They who, without adequate exertions, expect that, by a single effort, they shall reach the *summit*, will probably discover they are only at the *foot* of the hill. They who read one subject, and bestow their thoughts on another,

should not be surprized to find inattention visited with ill success. They who conceive that every thing is to be accomplished by the force of native genius: or, they who think nothing can be accomplished without it, may safely calculate upon remaining, as they deserve, "unaltered and unimproved." Those, also, who commence the career of exertion at the season of maturity, should not expect to find themselves as susceptible of improvement as in the plastic spirit of youth and ductility.

It is the design of our being, and a law of our nature, to owe every great improvement to the continued cultivation and exercise of our powers and faculties. The mental, like the corporeal, powers of mankind, improve or decay, in proportion as they are cultivated or neglected. No one has hitherto exercised his powers to the utmost extent of their capacity. Minds, even, the most highly improved, fall far short of the elevation at which they are capable of arriving.

It is dangerous to believe in the supreme efficacy of natural genius, and the comparative

inutility of cultivation and experience. A firm conviction in the truth of an opinion, often extends very far towards its realization. "We grow to what we seem." The renown of possessing, or a secret consciousness of being capable of acquiring, superior endowments, has frequently led to their actual attainment. Some pains, at least, will be taken to establish the accuracy of the conjecture; and, perhaps, some new energy of exertion will be bestowed, to acquire that excellence, which, thus encouragingly, is believed to be within our reach.

NOTES

NOTES.

ON NATIONAL CHARACTER.

Note (a,) page 25.

THE languages of the East and West are different; and therefore it has been considered, that the inhabitants of the East and West are of a different *origin!* But, were those languages always different? Have the languages of Europe undergone no change? Has that of England remained stationary? The questions of the origin of language, and of the "*confusion*" or diversity of tongues; are both curious and interesting. But the discussion of them, would not here be appropriate. The Scriptures have decided, that the one was revealed; and the other, the effect of miraculous interposition.

Note (b,) page 26.

A writer on the physical history of man, has supposed, that Adam and Eve were black; that this was a complexion the best suited to their condition and circumstances; and that the various shades which now exist, from sooty jet, to the "pale, unripened beauties of the North," are all the effect of civilization.

We want the confirmation of historical facts, to support such a theory. All rational speculation, in the absence of

unequivocal evidence, would startle at the unaccountable scheme of placing the Aborigines of the human race, in the very hottest portion of the globe; and creating them black, in order to endure it. But heat does not produce blackness. The hypothesis is not plausible on another ground. The evident object of the human creation, was happiness; and the most direct and easy means of attaining it, must, in the origin, be presumed. Consequently, the *locus in quo*, the garden of Eden, the paradise of the first age of the world, would be in some mild and genial climate of the East, free from the vicissitudes of the western and northern regions, and distant from the extremes either of heat or cold.

Why should the earth be adorned with ten thousand diversities of hue and shade, and all living nature—all the animal kingdom, except man—present such an infinite variety of color and brilliancy; whilst *he*, the paragon of all, should stalk abroad in the grim livery of darkness? This supposition is worse than the idea of "a drab-colored world!"

ON THE ENGLISH CHARACTER.

Note to page 52.

It is not too much to say, that there exists in England examples of the most faultless moral excellence, and the highest talent, that ever distinguished the human race. We shall look in vain to other periods, or in other countries, for greater virtue, either public or private; for more inflexible justice; more resolute independence; or a more rational exercise of power. The religion of our country is equally removed from superstition and indifference.—Our

national feelings, from stoical pride, and sensual luxury; and, in our mental character, we are free from the errors and prejudices of ignorance, and the pedantry and dogmatism of learning.

Many of our countrymen are distinguished for some particular talent, or exalted virtue. There are many who are absorbed and guided by one master pursuit or passion. Even in this respect, the ardor, the perseverance, and success of the English, are pre-eminent.

What age or country can compete with England, in the virtue of *benevolence?* It was reserved to the perseverance and humanity of some individuals in the present age, to set free, millions of the black population. Institutions raised to the shrine of charity, present themselves at every step—the work, at first, of individual exertion and perseverance. Whatever may be the difference of opinion, as to the result of the measure, who can hesitate to applaud the *motive* and the *zeal* of those who convey moral instruction into every uncultivated clime? And these are not the acts of the government, but the spontaneous benevolence of the individual. No enactments were necessary to establish these societies—no legislative interference, to promote or support them!

ON CRANIOLOGY.

Note (c,) page 102.

The system, in its first statement, was denominated "*Craniology*," from its principles being dependent on the form of *the cranium;* but it is now thought more accurate to use the term "PHRENOLOGY," or, a description of *the brain,* the seat of thought, of sensation, and vitality.

It is contended, that the theory is an improvement on *moral*, as well as *metaphysical*, science. It is an admitted and philosophical principle, that a system which explains all the known phenomena of any department of nature, and which harmonizes with its general appearances, is not only entitled to respect, but must be received *as true*, until a better can be established. Thus the Newtonian theory of gravitation, is supported by its consistency with the phenomena of nature. Now the present theory appears to account for all the human feelings, sentiments, and intellectual faculties, and to explain the general nature and character of man, with a completeness superior to any former system.

In the history of MORAL SCIENCE, it is curious to observe the confidence with which the various theorists have each brought forward his own peculiar doctrine, as the only principle and foundation of the moral conduct of man, and the only mode of accounting for its phenomena. Thus we have had *self-love* described as the only original principle of action. Others have contended for *benevolence* and *sympathy*. By some, the merit of actions has been tried according to a real or supposed standard of *abstract rectitude*, or *inherent justice;* whilst others appeal only to the criterion of *utility*. The advocates of phrenology explain these contrarieties of human opinion, by the doctrines of their favorite system; and it certainly must be allowed as a very plausible argument in its favor, if it can be shewn that the numerous moral and intellectual phenomena of human nature are capable of elucidation by that system, *and by that alone.*

Now the mode in which the Phrenologists account for these different and conflicting theories, is, to ascribe them to the result of the *predominant sentiment*, or propensity of

their several authors. Thus, the disciples of SELF-LOVE are supposed to possess but a small portion of the organ of benevolence; and finding themselves but little influenced, or actuated, by that amiable sentiment, with a sophistication very natural to those in whom self-esteem thus stands predominant; they assume, as an indisputable truth, that every one does, or ought, to think and feel exactly like themselves; and, consequently, they proceed to reason on this hypothesis!

On the contrary, the man of large and predominant BENEVOLENCE, he "whose hand is open as day to melting charity," kindly conceives, *with an amiable forgetfulness of facts*, that the rest of the world resemble himself! He feels no self-interest predominating, nor even consciously mingling, with the pure, and charitable, and philanthropic motives, by which his mind is impelled and actuated. Is it wonderful that a character, so embued with "the milk of human kindness," should reject the theory of self, and cling, with fondness to the more congenial doctrine of a native and paramount benevolence? The operation of the same kindly principle, will explain the origin, and illustrate the accuracy, of that theory of human SYMPATHY, which has been brought forward by the philosophy and the taste of Adam Smith.

How, again, has it originated, that one class of moral philosophers attained, or comprehended, the idea of ABSTRACT MORAL RECTITUDE. From whence did they borrow that idea? Out of what combinations was it formed? The senses present nothing abstract—the senses present nothing but single and unconnected facts. The man of mere observation knows nothing of abstract rectitude; he does not even know what the term is intended to signify. There is no mode of accounting for the origin of this

notion of inherent rectitude or justice, than by the admission of a principle or faculty in the human mind, specially adapted for its comprehension: that faculty is denominated *conscientiousness.*

We pass next to UTILITY. The man of the smallest portion of enthusiastic and benevolent feeling, with the highest range of intellect, is the best fitted to determine what is generally useful. He will not be led astray by fervid conceptions of human perfectibility, nor softened by the feelings of human weakness—his will be the view of the practical, and, at the same time, the worldly philosopher.

The METAPHYSICAL THEORIES hitherto extant profess to explain all the phenomena of mind, by referring them to *perception, memory, judgment,* and *imagination.* Some modern writers have added to the catalogue, as distinct faculties, *attention, conception,* and *association of ideas;* whilst others have subjoined *fancy* and *wit.* A very cursory view of these supposed elements of mind, will satisfy us of their inadequacy to perform the function assigned to them.

PERCEPTION is that general power, by which we are enabled to recognize simple objects, or to receive simple impressions.

But those objects and impressions are of *various kinds;* and, admitting the existence of this general power—allowing there is a distinct capacity in the mind to receive the forms or impressions of external objects, it still must be recollected that those objects are of various natures. The subjects with which the mind is conversant, present themselves in a variety of aspects. In some, the chief quality is form. The general outline of all objects presented to the senses, is supposed to be the first quality that is con-

sidered by the intellect. The next object of the senses, probably, is colour. Space and relative position, perhaps, may succeed; and from these few and simple perceptions, the mind advances to the knowledge of a vast assemblage of facts, in the multiform appearances of animate and inanimate nature. Some are capable of the nicest discernment of one class of phenomena, and are utterly insensible to other classes. Now the objection is, that the same power is supposed to be capable of ascertaining the nature of all these varieties; yet we find, that each sense is fitted for its appropriate objects, and is unable to travel out of its appointed sphere. By analogy, it is reasonable to believe, that there are equally separate faculties for the reception and combination of the ideas transmitted through the medium of the senses.

Another general faculty of the mind, is denominated MEMORY; and to this, as a *general* term, there may be no objection. But it must be obvious, that there are *various species* of memory—that one mind is retentive of names and words, another of places, and a third of classes of objects, and of general and comprehensive propositions. The one is the verbal memory—the other is the philosophical. The former is the recollection of artificial signs,—the latter, of the things signified, and the truths and principles of art and science. The one will form the linguist and the botanist—the other, when aided by the superior faculties, the philosopher

The most valuable intellectual power of the mind, is JUDGMENT; but judgment is conversant with a great variety of subjects; and it often happens, that they who are eminent for the accuracy and skill of their decisions in one class of subjects, are strikingly deficient in others. How different must be the nature of that power, which is

applied to the estimation of the nature and merits of poetry, of painting, of sculpture, of music, of architecture, and of all the arts of composition! Yet we are told, that this is an *individual* faculty, a single power, or quality, of the mind, by which the whole of these mental operations is performed!

The IMAGINATION obviously presents a great diversity of appearance. The poet, the painter, and the musician, are equally inventive; but the materials with which they compose, are strikingly various. Will it be said, that the poet is capable of excelling, in the same degree, in the attainments of the painter, or the musician; or that either of the latter possess, or can acquire, the power of rivalling the former? There may be some rare instances of a moderate share of eminence by one individual, in all the works of imagination; but none of a surpassing or superior character.

Note (d,) page 124.

The doctrines of Craniology are opposed by some persons, because they do not, in their apprehension, agree with the theory which they entertain, "*that all persons are born with minds of the same, or of equal, capacity.*"

It is a curious circumstance in the constitution of the human mind, that, whilst fond of novelty, it is slow to receive truth. With an insatiable curiosity, and an intuitive regard for whatever is "new and strange;" there is a disposition to doubt all that fails to harmonize with *previous impressions.* There is a ludicrous credulity towards those wonders, which tend to confirm, or which do not oppose, our preconceived opinions; and there is a scepticism exhibited, of equal rationality, against those inventions, that are calculated, if true, to overthrow our

habitual errors, and expose the fallacy of our favorite theories. Attached to the systems we have been taught, and to the opinions we have formed, we dislike a discovery that subjects us to the mortification of acknowledging our past mistakes, and the trouble of correcting them. Indolence, prejudice, and pride, are all naturally allied against the intrusion of a new and conflicting truth.

For the satisfaction of those who cannot surrender the doctrine of *acquired* genius, it may be stated, that Craniology establishes no new objection against their favorite opinion; it shews only *the result* of internal action, but does not determine *the source* from whence it springs. Whether intellectual power depends upon native strength, or upon cultivation and exercise, this theory does not pretend to decide. Genius may depend upon the agency both of nature and art. It may sometimes be more indebted to its original bestowments, than its subsequent culture. It may unite the operations of both; or, it may owe a larger share of its accumulated excellence to human labor, than to native and inherent force. In whatever way that question may be shaped or decided, the Craniologist has no concern. He looks to THE FACT as it *actually* presents itself—he investigates only the physical and organic nature of man—he leaves the rest of the subject, which he considers only as *speculative*, to the researches and the ingenuity of another class of philosophers.

ON THE PERIODICAL CRITIC.

Note (e,) page 259.

Since the composition of this sketch, I have met with a general confirmation of my opinions, in a writer of high

respectability: and, as the ground I have trodden may be considered somewhat *debateable*, I subjoin an extract, which will shew, at least, that I am not *singular* in my sentiments.

" After the invention of printing, when books began to be multiplied on every subject, and with every possible degree of merit, various means were adopted to enable the lovers of literature to select with judgment from among the new works which were addressed to their curiosity.

" One of the means of enlightening the public was, for men of authority in the republic of letters, to publish, at stated intervals, critical journals, now called Reviews. The first of these was the *Journal des Savans*, a work which was supported in France by men of great talents, and unquestionable integrity, for upwards of a century.

" But, like most other benefits, this of checking false pretensions in literature, by means of periodical reviews, has been susceptible of enormous abuses; and no imposition which could be practised on the public, by authors or booksellers, equals the abuse of the name of criticism, practised in our modern *anonymous* reviews.

" They are made the vehicle of every bad passion; and the concealed writers in them are generally the most worthless characters, and even the most illiterate pretenders to learning. The best books are flippantly condemned in them, to gratify the personal malice, or party rancour, of the concealed critic; and the worst books are often extolled, in pretended criticisms, written by the authors themselves, or by their particular friends.

" Studied concealment is always a strong presumptive evidence of badness of intention: no criticism ought, therefore, to have weight, or even to be read or quoted,

by men of moral worth or intelligence, unless the name of its author is avowed.

" Anonymous criticism, as it has for several years been carried on in Great Britain, is, in the emphatic language of a late writer, " a libel on the moral character of the country; a gross abuse of the liberties of the press; an imposition on public confidence; a scourge of genius; and a nuisance to literature."

" Our essayists, from Addison to Cumberland and Knox, afford specimens of criticism," observes the same writer, " such as no man ever need to disown, and such as would always be read with avidity by the public. True literary criticism, in the hands of real scholars, is the opposite of every thing that characterizes most of our modern Reviews; it never searches for personal anecdotes of an author, and confounds not, in its disquisitions, his foibles, or weaknesses, with the merit of his performance; it never magnifies blemishes; shuts its eyes to beauties; becomes a party; misquotes; delights in abusive and violent epithets; nor arrogates its own infallibility. It is, in a word, a liberal science, which no honest man need be ashamed to exercise and avow; but, in the hands of *concealed assassins*, it is unfortunately converted to the most injurious purposes."

" Anonymous reviewing did more to blight genius, and discourage literary emulation, in the period during which it had credit with the public, than all the ravages and restrictions of the Goths and Vandals. Between the years 1760 and 1804, reviews were read as oracles throughout Great Britain; and few suspected, that the praise of book was generally written by the authors themselves, and its insertion paid for at a regular price; or, that the abuse of a book proceeded from the author's

enemy, and its insertion also was paid for in the same manner."—THE REV. DAVID BLAIR, A.M.

"With respect to the general interests of literature, it may be advanced, without fear of contradiction, that they have been more injured than benefited by the prevalency and influence of periodical reviews.

"Literary reviews were made for mediocrity. They have done nothing for superior genius. They are the converse of Falstaff's proposition on wit."

Lady Morgan's Letter to the Reviewers of "ITALY."

ON THE MAN OF GENIUS.

Note (f,) page 277.

"The growth of the intellectual faculties of ROUSSEAU was *unusually slow:* up to the age of thirty-nine, his talents were unknown to his friends, and almost to himself. He had previously, it is true, obscure intimations of his strength, from visitations of ambitious reverie—*the inquietude of genius was about him;* but, up to the very moment of the explosion of his mind, neither Rousseau himself, nor any who had known him, ever anticipated the career that was before him."

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